



THE NIGHT FLYER

NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY



OUR MISSION

To preserve & protect native bat populations within the state of Florida.

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FWC INSTALLS BAT HOUSES IN BABCOCK-WEBB WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is currently installing sixteen bat houses in the Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management area. Recent surveys conducted by the Florida Bat Conservancy confirmed the presence of the Florida bonneted bat, a species that had last been recorded in the Webb in 1979. The surveys also indicated a low abundance of this species, which is found only in the southern portion of the Florida peninsula and is classified as Endangered by the FWC. Encouraged by the news, and in an attempt to strengthen the population, the FWC decided to install bat houses within the Webb targeting this species.

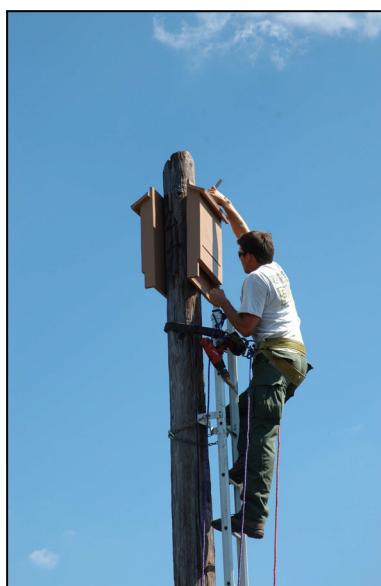
The Florida bonneted bat is a colonial species and will move into manmade structures, such as bat houses. In fact, a colony has been living in a bat house in Fort Myers for the past three years. It is Florida's largest species, with a wingspan of twenty inches and a body length of 3 ¾ inches. At this size, it needs a larger crevice width for roosting purposes than other Florida species. The colony in Fort Myers moved into a single chambered bat house which has a crevice width of a little over one inch. Most of the other colonial bats in Florida, such

as Brazilian free-tailed bats and evening bats, prefer a ¾ inch crevice width like those found in most triple chambered bat houses.

FWC wildlife biologist Brian Scofield was assigned the project. After careful review, FWC decided to purchase eight single chambered and eight triple chambered bat houses. The single chambered bat houses are being installed to attract Florida bonneted bats, and the triple chambered bat houses are for Brazilian free-tailed bats and evening bats. (Note: Brazilian free tailed bats are a native Florida species). The bat houses were constructed by Florida Bat Conservancy bat house builder, George Fenner, and delivered to the Webb in October. Scofield finished the installations in November.

All the bat houses were installed 17 to 23 feet above the ground and in

locations mutually agreed upon by the Conservancy and Webb management. We will all now wait patiently to see if, and when, the bats decide to move in. Our compliments to the FWC and Scofield for their conservation efforts!



FWC biologist Brian Scofield installs a bat house in the Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area.



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FBC IN THE COMMUNITY: UPCOMING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

January 2: Audubon Society of the Everglades - West Palm Beach - 7:30 pm. Meeting to be held at the Howard Park Community Center (on Parker Avenue, just South of Okeechobee Boulevard).

January 16: St. Petersburg Audubon - 7:00 pm. Meeting to be held at the Science Center, 7701 22nd Avenue N., St. Petersburg.



January 24-28: Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival - Titusville. Sponsored by Nikon and the Brevard Nature Alliance, this 10th Annual event features keynote presentations, seminars, workshops, field trips, art competition and exhibit center. Great food included and enough down time to explore this area of paradise! Speakers include: Dr. John Fitzpatrick, Director, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (Sponsored by The Nature Conservancy); Kevin T. Karlson, Author, Photographer, and Shorebird Expert; Bill Thompson, Editor, *Bird Watcher's Digest* and author of *Bird Watching for Dummies*, and Jonathan Wood of The Raptor Project. Visit www.nbhd.com/fly/ for more information and registration.

January 31: Selby Library - Sarasota. Address: 1331 First St., Sarasota, FL 34236. Call 941-861-1100 for details.

*For more information or directions to any of these programs,
please call us: 727-710-2287*



FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY WEBSITE GETS A NEW LOOK

In December, you'll discover that our website has a new look. The son of one of FBC's volunteers contacted us looking for a very special bat gift for his mother. In the course of discussing possible options, such as bat T-shirts, bat books and bat jewelry, it was discovered he was in the website hosting and development business. We mentioned that our website needed updating, and among other things, the logo needed to be changed from the Florida Bat Center to the Florida Bat Conservancy. It was then that the idea for a very unique gift emerged. He suggested that his company develop new graphics for the website, and serve as the web host, as a gift to his mom.

That volunteer, Ann Walker, is a Special Education Teacher at Memorial Middle School in Tampa. She became a volunteer in 2002 and has been caring for injured and orphaned bats ever since. In particular, she has grown fond of Seminole bats and has become an expert in caring for bats of the genus *Lasiurus*. In 2006, Ann was elected to the Florida Bat Conservancy Board of Directors. Her son, Scott Walker, is part owner and managing partner of Silicon Prairie Web Solutions based in Ames Iowa (spws.net). We take this opportunity to thank both of them for their significant contributions. Be sure to check out our new look and features: www.floridabats.org!

STORMWATER POLLUTION AND THE ROLE OF BAT CONSERVATION IN PLANT CITY: CAN BATS HELP SAVE SURFACE WATERS?

BY SHAWNA HIMELRIGHT

Each year, FDOT District 7 provides money to different municipalities and environmental interest groups in order to raise community awareness of water pollution. Projects and proposals come from a wide variety of inspired minds: the grants have helped create dog parks that emphasize the importance of cleaning up after Fido, supported children's programs from the Museum of Science and Industry, and encouraged Florida Friendly Yards. This year, some of the funding will go toward conserving some winged insectivores: BATS!

Since the primary goal of my job is to encourage community awareness of stormwater pollution, both source and non-point, it can be difficult to come up with ideas that will not only grab momentary attention, but will teach people practices that can easily be implemented into their daily lives. Since a large portion of all water pollution is linked to the use of pesticides – herbicides and fertilizers – discouraging the use of such chemicals is a hot topic in my field, but it's combated by a residential love for a nice plush lawn. We can't encourage people to stray away from having a lovely front yard... but we can educate them on how to do it a bit more wisely if we can find a tool to make it interesting.

My barn has a local bat. From my back porch, I can watch him pick off insects that gather around our night lights – he swoops back and forth, tirelessly making his evening meal quota with an amazing amount of grace. My horses stick their heads out of their windows, their ears forward – watching him work. Around 2 am, he disappears – I often wonder where he goes, for he is a meaningful visitor.

Sharing my intrigue over my visitor with others was infectious. It seemed like anytime I mentioned spotting my voracious winged

guest, others would quickly chime in – “Have you seen the bats at the State Road 39 Bridge?” or “My neighbor has some bats. I keep trying to figure out how to get some of my own... I love to watch them leave in the evenings.” My thoughts on how to bring this to the community through encouraging natural habitat and integrated pest management began to roll. I went to the local library to begin my research – where I discovered that all books on bats had a waiting list.

The next few months were profitable in getting this project started. I met with professors from University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences, and had the pleasure of meeting Cyndi Marks at a Bat Workshop in Temple Terrace. I began regularly visiting the SR-39 overpass, where a colony of Brazilian free-tailed bats makes a home in between reducing pests in my community.

On a municipal level, the work is just beginning. We will be establishing bat houses within the City for our own research, and hopefully the data collected will go on to benefit IFAS, the Florida Bat Conservancy, and even Bat Conservation International. Community bat house locations have been discussed – I was initially planning only to utilize City locations, but local industries and other private locations are interested in becoming a part of a project. It seems local support and interest in this project is extremely widespread, which can only mean good news for the bats of our town – and eventually, our local watershed.

For more information, contact:

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Plant City, FL 33563
813-757-9289 x 249
Fax: 813-757-9049



Bat Facts

Brazilian free-tailed bat
(*Tadarida brasiliensis*)

The short fur varies in color from dark brown to grayish-brown. Like other bats in the family *Molossidae* the tail extends well beyond a short tail membrane. The upper lips have vertical wrinkles. Long stiff hairs protrude from the toes and extend beyond the claws. This bat has a scent gland that emits a musky odor. A colony of these bats can be recognized from a distance by the odor alone. The odor is often mistakenly thought to come from the bat guano.

In Florida, this species forms large colonies ranging from a few hundred to several thousand. It roosts almost totally in man-made structures, primarily buildings and bridges. It particularly likes to roost under barrel tile roofs. This is the most likely species to move into bat houses in Florida.

- ◆ Insectivorous. Feeds on moths, flies and beetles
- ◆ Females give birth to a single pup, in early June
- ◆ This is likely Florida's most abundant bat; found throughout Florida, except the Florida Keys
- ◆ This species is commonly referred to as the Mexican free-tailed bat in the western United States.

FBC EDUCATIONAL
SNAPSHOTS: A VISIT TO
SAWGRASS SPRINGS
MIDDLE SCHOOL



October 10th, FBC Board of Directors member Bill Kern of Ft. Lauderdale joined Cyndi and George Marks for an educational program at Sawgrass Springs Middle School. He helped provide students, teachers, and families a one-on-one encounter with live bats and their favorite lunch—mealworms. Programs like this one help build friendship and understanding for bats from an early age, helping create a better future for all.

Photos courtesy of JoAnn Cantlupe



TRAVEL UPDATE: UGANDA – AUGUST 2006

No other area in Africa can match its amazing diversity of habitats, its incredible bird list of over 1000 species, and its access to the last remaining Mountain Gorillas.

BY DAVID REDFIELD, FSU Professor Emeritus, FBC Member and Explorer

Winston Churchill called Uganda the “Pearl of Africa.” Arguably the richest African birding destination, this small landlocked country is about the size of Great Britain. Having personally seen 534 avian species there in just 23 days, I support the claim. Then too there are Uganda’s marvelous mammals – 51 species seen, 16 which I’d not seen before. My adventure ranged from the source of the White Nile on Lake Victoria to the snow-capped Ruwenzori Range, the mountain forests of the Virunga volcanoes, to the extensive savannas around the awe-inspiring Murchison Falls.

While at Murchison, we took a launch trip along the Victoria Nile, to the Lake Albert Delta where the west-flowing Victoria Nile makes an abrupt turn and becomes the north-flowing Albert Nile. A plethora of water birds throng the well-wooded banks of the river including the Shoebill. The huge Shoebills stood motionless on the edge of channels waiting for a hapless catfish or frogs, allowing us close approach. Additionally, large numbers of Nile Crocodiles, Hippopotamus, African Buffalo, Vervet Monkey and Olive Baboon were seen at close range, as well as African Elephants bathing in the shallows.

The vista point at the top of the Murchison Falls offers incredible views of the Victoria Nile boiling down the narrow gorge. Nearby, bare rocky islets are the favored perches and breeding sites of Rock Pratincole. Thousands of fruit bats roost in the numerous cracks and crevices of the cliffs below the falls. We watched an eight-foot-long Black Mamba scaling the cliffs to feed on the bats. Mambas are the deadliest snakes in Africa.

In the evening, we successfully embarked on another brief night drive in search of one of Africa’s most sought-after birds, the Pennant-winged Nightjar. Actually, we set a record for seeing seven nightjar species in that single evening.

The next day was spent in the vast Budongo Forest Reserve, the largest natural forest area in East Africa. We concentrated much of our attention on “The Royal Mile,” the wide forestry track considered to be the country’s premier forest birding locality. It was the easiest and most productive forest birding I have ever experienced.

We then continued birding along the dusty drive to Jinja. Jinja is situated on the shores of Lake Victoria and is famous for being the official source of the Nile. Jinja’s completely renovated *Gately-on-the-Nile Hotel* was a perfect place to celebrate our successes at dinner and bid each other farewell. Our group left for Entebbe the following morning visiting the extensive, 100-year-old Entebbe Botanical Gardens in the afternoon.

Intrigued? Learn more about this adventure, including the state of animal welfare, conservation efforts, and the political landscape, by visiting the FBC website for David’s full trip transcript: floridabats.org

HOLIDAY SHOPPING WITH THE FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY

CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITES, CALCULATE THE TOTAL, AND MAIL TO THE FBC TODAY. ORDERS SHIPPED VIA USPS. CALL (727-710-2287) OR EMAIL (FLORIDABATS@AOL.COM) FOR SPECIAL HANDLING.

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Learn about the natural history and evolution of bats, important bat identifying features, their flying and echolocation abilities, habitats, and migration patterns. 160 pages. Price: \$6.95

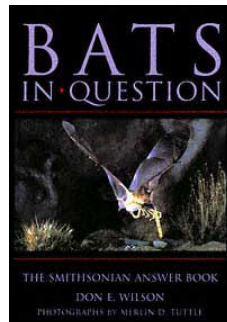
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Bats In Question

By Don E. Wilson

Seeking to dispel the myths associated with these remarkable creatures and arguing for their key role in a balanced ecosystem, Bats in Question covers all aspects of bat biology in a practical question-and-answer format. Full color photographs, soft cover, 192 pages. Price: \$24.95

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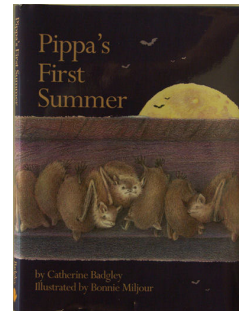
For Young Readers

Pippa's First Summer

By Catherine Badgley

For intermediate readers, this lovely story about a young big brown bat is beautifully written and illustrated. Hardback. 114 pages. Price: \$14.95

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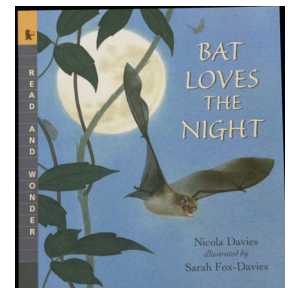


Bat Loves the Night

By Nicola Davies

For ages 3 and up. Softcover, 32 pages, 9 x 9 7/8 full-color illustrations. Price: \$6.99

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Bats in Cave T-Shirt

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Adult sizes \$18.00

☐ Adult: M, L, XL, XXL

Kid sizes \$14.00

☐ Kids: S (6-8), M (10-12), L (14-16)



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Color: Natural

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☐ Adult: S, M, L, XL, XXL

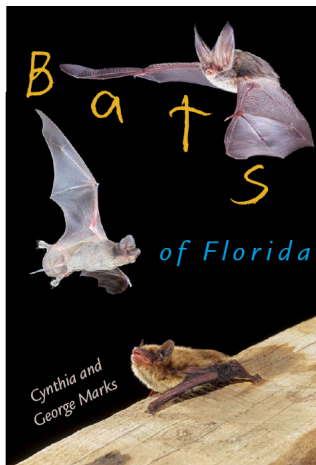
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☐ Kids: S (6-8), M (10-12), L (14-16)



**Bat Earrings***By Wild Bryde*

Made of recycled brass which is then plated in either 14k gold or rhodium (a special, non-tarnishing alloy that looks like silver). Ear-wires are 14k gold-fill or sterling silver. Price: \$17.00

Silver: ☐ Quantity: _____Gold: ☐ Quantity: _____**BATS OF FLORIDA***By Cynthia & George Marks*

FBC has reserved a limited number of copies for Members and friends at a 20% discount.

____ Copies @ \$19.95 each = _____

Bat Detector

Our favorite bat detector! The Bat Box III is made in England by Stag Electronics, and has a tunable range from 20kHz to 120kHz, with jacks for headphones and a tape recorder. The frequency dial is illuminated making it easy to read at night.

Price: \$285

☐ Quantity: _____**Bats of the World T-Shirt**

This shirt features 8 bats on the front and a large flying fox on the back.

Color: Sage

Adult sizes \$20.00

☐ Adult: XL, XXL

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MEMBERSHIP

Since its beginnings in 1990, through the acquisition of 501(c)(3) status in 1994, to the present day, our focus has been the conservation of one of the state's most unique and vital natural resources: native bats. Rather than serving this mission in a single static location, volunteers are needed from the panhandle to the keys, and everywhere in between. Educators, researchers, rescuers, rehabilitators, and advocates all over the state must be actively involved in the all-volunteer organization in order to reach our goals.

Member support helps fund these critical activities. From rescue and rehabilitation to education, advocacy, and research, every dollar donated directly impacts Florida's bats.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTINUING MEMBERS:

Bat Conservationist: Ralph and Gisela Arwood

Bat Patrons: Kathryn Swain, Joy and Larry Linn

Bat Supporters: Gene and Carol Loibl

Bat Friends: Col. Charles T. Dabrowski, Michelle Mann, Steve Mathis, Dave and Sylvia Phillips

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Special Thanks to:

Joy & Larry Linn and Ralph Richardson for acquiring matching donations from IBM and Prudential.



Join us and help protect these fascinating, beneficial mammals!

Please consider helping Florida's bats by becoming a member. We are a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization working hard to protect bats by means of public education, conservation projects, rescue, rehabilitation, and research.

☐ New

☐ Regular Member \$15

☐ Bat Friend \$30

☐ Bat Supporter \$50

☐ Renewing

☐ Bat Patron \$100

☐ Bat Conservationist \$250 or more

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HELPING FLORIDA'S BATS

Florida Bat Conservancy

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NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY

INSIDE:

Bat houses go up at Babcock-Webb, FBC has a new website, Plant City is studying bats and stormwater management, David Redfield visits Uganda, photos from recent education programs, holiday shopping with FBC, and Member News.



CALLING ALL FBC VOLUNTEERS:

Please help FBC in the creation of its year-end special report by emailing your 2006 total hours donated and a description of your activities to:

floridabats@aol.com

Please send in your hours by January 15th. Thanks for all you do for Florida's Bats!