



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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EMBASSY CREEK ELEMENTARY 5TH GRADE SELECTS FBC FOR ANNUAL AWARD

The fifth graders at Embassy Creek Elementary in Cooper City (Broward County) are serious about the environment and social action, and annually conduct fundraisers to put their money where their hearts and minds are.

This year, one-hundred and fifty-five students researched non-profit organizations around the globe and then crafted persuasive essays to convince their classmates that their choice was a worthy beneficiary of all their hard work.

Antonio Juncosa's essay about Florida's bats was voted #1 in the environmental category. Thanks to his support, Embassy Creek presented FBC with a donation of \$1,500. In addition to FBC, the fifth graders also presented a donation to the African

Medical and Research Foundation under the social service category, in response to Libby "Blue" Kaufman's essay on their work.



Embassy Creek's awards assembly: From left to right, FBC Vice President Bill Kern, Principal Robert Becker, 5th Graders Antonio Juncosa and Libby "Blue" Kaufman

F B C Board members Sarah and Bill Kern attended the ceremony on behalf of the organization. "We were so impressed with what these young people have accomplished!" said Sarah.

Many schools and youth groups around the state

chose Spring service projects to help preserve bats and bat habitats this year—this edition of the *Night Flyer* spotlights several organizations who have completed bat house installations and educational programs in their communities.

Thanks to everyone who is helping get the word out about Florida's bats!

It's Bat Maternity Season!

Bat roosts should not be disturbed between April 15—August 15.





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NEW WILD FLORIDA SERIES NOW SHOWING ON PUBLIC TELEVISION

The first Episode of the new Wild Florida series developed by PBS television is about Florida bats, and includes Conservancy President, George Marks, describing how the Conservancy conducts surveys by eavesdropping on bat sonar. Cyndi Marks introduces viewers to native Florida bats and talks about bat conservation. The episode also includes Ken Glover providing a tour of the University of Florida bat house and ends with the evening emergence of thousands of bats. Deborah Cottrell, DVM takes the viewers to a sinkhole near Gainesville that is also home to thousands of bats, finds an injured bat, and performs some actual bat rehabilitation on camera. Check your local PBS listings for showings.

Be sure to visit the Wild Florida website page on bats:

wildflorida.tv/bats

View the video titled, "How to build a bat house" by clicking on the "downloads" button. Watch as FBC volunteer, George Fenner, shares his techniques on how to construct a quality bat house. The plans for the bat house shown are on the FBC website:

floridabats.org/ImagesBHs/Bat_House_Plans

**FLORIDA BATS BID FAREWELL TO
RETIRING BOARD MEMBER**

FBC extends its warmest thanks for a job well done to "retiring" board member Tish Thomas, who first became involved with FBC in 1996. At that time, she was planning an exhibit on bats for the Florida Adventure Museum in Punta Gorda. She later became Assistant Director of the Imaginarium Hands-On Museum in Ft. Myers. Currently she serves as Executive Director of the Charlotte Local Education Foundation and is a program coordinator for the statewide Take Stock in Children program. She also devotes many hours working with Habitat for Humanity.

Tish applied her vast experience working with non-profit organizations to her board tenure, especially in funding strategies and educational programming. She has been a great asset for FBC, and we wish her the best in all of her future endeavors.

REMINDER: BAT MATERNITY SEASON APRIL 15—AUGUST 15

Exclusion is the only method of successfully removing a bat colony permanently from a house or other structure. Done in the right time of year, a proper exclusion insures no bats are trapped inside to perish. However, exclusions performed during the maternity season will result in the death of young bats. FBC continues to work with governmental agencies to gain better protection for bat colonies during the maternity season by pressing for regulations that would prevent disturbances or exclusions during this time. While it may be difficult to convince a homeowner to allow the bats to remain until after the maternity season, it is actually the best choice for both bats and people.



Tish Thomas receives a Thank You from FBC president George Marks featuring photos by Ralph Arwood



Reef Rovers 4H Club

SARASOTA COUNTY 4-H CLUB BUILDS FOR BATS

Members of the Sarasota County 4H club 'Reef Rovers' recently installed several bat houses, which they are donating to various public parks, preserves, schools and community centers throughout Sarasota and Manatee counties. The objective of their Bat Buddies program is to provide an alternative habitat for bats, as well as increase public awareness about the ecological value of these native mammals.

While the Reef Rovers have participated in a variety of marine biology and conservation programs, including beach cleanups, native plantings and storm drain markings, "They were eager to get involved with something wildlife-oriented," club leader Deborah Chapman explains.

The Bat Buddies project is funded by a grant from the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (sarasotabay.org). While some of the bat houses were purchased from conservation groups, the students built, stained and caulked many of the bat houses themselves. The Reef Rovers installed bat houses at Pocono Trail in Nokomis, Crowley Museum in Manatee County, Twin Lakes Park and Longwood Run Park in Sarasota.

Pine View School in Osprey also received a bat house from the Reef Rovers. "We've had a bat infestation in several of our buildings and this will provide a wonderful alternative to keep them on campus, but keep them away from our school buildings and our students," environmental science teacher Wallace 'Spike' Black explains.

In addition to offering these alternative habitats, the club wants to help dispel myths about bats with a presentation they are planning to offer to schools and other organizations in the area. "My hope for the project is that we're able to reach out to people, kids in particular. One person CAN make a difference," club president Samantha Gillen, 17, says.

FBC presented its bat education program to the Reef Rovers in November 2006.



Amanda Capps painting bat house



Reef Rovers hard at work



Bat Facts

The genus *Lasiurus* is unique because females give birth to up to four pups at a time. In Florida, we have four *Lasiurus* species: Hoary, Yellow, Seminole and Red.

Since June, FBC has successfully cared for a mother Yellow bat and three pups which were displaced by a wind storm in Sarasota County. The mother and the three male pups will be placed near their original roost later this month. Thanks to everyone who helps support this important work!



BAT HOUSE BY THE 3RD GRADERS OF MERRITT ISLAND & HOME DEPOT

Karla Sheridan, a University of Florida alumna and a fan of the bat house in Gainesville, added a unit about bats to her curriculum this year, including constructing a bat house with her class.

The children made a list of things that they would like to learn about and research. Over a span of seven weeks, they studied things like where bats live in the world, what color they are, what they eat, how fast they fly, how they help us, and other subjects, like measurement and sound. They wrote a letter to Home Depot, asking for a donation of supplies for the bat house. A parent volunteer was the “construction manager” and demonstrated to the children how to measure the wood and actually complete the construction of the house. After construction, the school custodian helped to raise and anchor the pole in a field behind the school.



Mrs. Sheridan’s class now has a working knowledge of bats and a respect for this intriguing mammal. The bat house will help insure future students will also have a chance to watch and learn all about Florida’s bats.

NAPLES FIRE DEPARTMENT RETURNS BIG BROWN BAT NURSERY COLONY TO SAFETY

Tree trimmers working on a royal palm in a residential area were surprised to find more than 20 female bats, with one or two pups each, nestled within the palm fronds they had removed. Realizing they needed help, the trimmers contacted Joanna Fitzgerald Vaught, director of the wildlife rehab center at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida in Naples. In turn, Joanna called the Florida Bat Conservancy Hotline, and together they determined a solution, but it required the skill, equipment, and expertise of a group of brave souls more likely to rescue humans than flying mammals. The Naples Fire Department quickly rose to the occasion and used their ladder truck to relocate the big brown bats to a nearby tree in the same neighborhood.

If the mothers had not been returned quickly to a tree in the same area, the female bats would have abandoned their pups and returned to the original area from which they had been removed. Thanks to swift action and great communication, this unnecessary loss of bats (a species rare to South Florida) was avoided. Mission accomplished—great job!



To learn more about the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, visit:
www.conservancy.org

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Since its beginnings in 1990, through the acquisition of 501(c)(3) status in 1994, to the present day, FBC's 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 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.

THANKS TO OUR CONTINUING MEMBERS:

Bat Conservationists: Lynn Huber

Bat Supporters: Anne M. Martin

Bat Friends: Ted Andresen, Chris Cargo, T J Coburn, Joe Maier

Regular: John Mayo

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Bat Patrons: Jennifer Fleet, Dr. and Mrs. Russ Reiling, Wendy Shagena

Bat Supporters: Candy Arnold, Charlotte County Natural Resources, Greg Coster, Shirley Mogansen

Bat Friends: Erik Johnson, Jean Smith

Regular: Prof. Tom Cravens, Judie Herr, Bob Hoffman, Chuck Holley, DVM, Buz Hilferty, Kerv. Hyland, Mary E. Miller, Mrs. Sheridan's Class at Mila Elementary

PLANT CITY UPDATE: BAT HOUSE DISTRIBUTION BEGINS

Last fall, Shawna Himelright, Plant City Water Resource Management's Environmental Education Coordinator, received funding from FDOT for the distribution of bat houses to willing Plant City residents and a monitoring program to assess their success. The goal of the project is improving water quality through integrated pest management. Workshops presented by the Florida Bat Conservancy have helped Shawna educate the residents participating in the project. After installing their bat houses, participants complete a survey that includes location, height, and the amount of sunlight the bat house receives. Participants will be contacted at intervals to see if their bat houses are occupied.

Five large bat houses will also be erected as part of the project. The first has already been installed on the University of Florida / Hillsborough Community College campus. Students from the college will be collecting and analyzing data from the participants who received bat houses.

Shawna hopes funding will be renewed to repeat the program and provide even more bat houses to local residents next year.



Shawna Himelright presents a bat house to Plant City resident Kerry Merrick



HELPING FLORIDA'S BATS

Florida Bat Conservancy

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NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY



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 \$15 ☐ Bat Friend \$30 ☐ Bat Supporter \$50

☐ *Renewing*

☐ Bat Patron \$100 ☐ Bat Conservationist \$250 or more

Name: _____ Email: _____

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Make checks payable to: Florida Bat Conservancy, P.O. Box 516, Bay Pines, FL 33744