

# THE NIGHT FLYER

## NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY

### FLORIDA BAT



### CONSERVANCY

#### OUR MISSION

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

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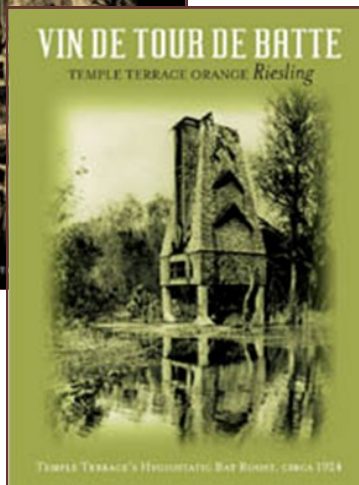
## UNIQUE FUNDRAISING STRATEGY TO BRING BACK ICONIC BAT HOUSE IN TEMPLE TERRACE

Enjoy a bottle of wine and help rebuild a landmark! A group of residents committed to rebuilding a piece of the Temple Terrace's history hopes others in the community will help toast them toward its success.

The *Friends of Temple Terrace Parks and Recreation* and the *Temple Terrace Preservation Society* have partnered with *Aspirations Winery* in a fundraising project to reconstruct the Bat Tower. It was built in 1924 on the banks of the Hillsborough River and destroyed by arsonists in 1979.

The winery's owner, Michael Rice, is offering two wines under the *Vin de Tour de Batte* label: the Bordeaux-style red *L'Collage* and the orange-infused *Temple Terrace Orange* riesling, in honor of the Temple orange. The bottles are priced at \$12 each, \$3 of which will go toward rebuilding what many residents say was Temple Terrace's greatest icon.

Temple Terrace resident Lana Burroughs, a member of the Temple Terrace Preservation Society, designed the wine's labels based on old photos of the Bat Tower near Riverhills Drive. It was one of 14 in the world designed by noted architect and Nobel Prize nominee Charles Campbell.



While the original structure was only occupied by bats for a short time, the planned replacement will be structured to attract and accommodate roosting bat species, with advice and support from the Florida Bat Conservancy during planning and construction. "This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the history of Temple Terrace and at the same time educate visitors about the importance of bats," says Cyndi

Marks, FBC Executive Director. The structure will be erected in the new 150-acre Riverfront Park.

*The wines are available at:*

*Aspirations Winery, 5116 E. Fowler Ave.  
Olde World Cheese Shop, 11001 N. 56th St.  
Chuck's Natural Marketplace, 11301 N. 56th St.  
Empress Tea Room, 6810 E. Fowler Ave.*



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## FBC IN THE COMMUNITY

**October 4:** The World of Bats and “A Night At the Museum,” South Florida Museum and Bishop Planetarium - Bradenton, 4—9 pm. Bat program in the Planetarium at 4:15. Enjoy planetarium shows all evening: *Live Star Talk* with Jeff Rodgers at 7:00, *Extreme Planets* at 7:30, *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame* at 8:15. Admission is half price after 4 pm. For more information, visit [southfloridamuseum.org](http://southfloridamuseum.org) or call (941) 746-4131.

**October 17:** Bat Program, Weedon Island Preserve, 1800 Weedon Island Drive NE St. Petersburg, 7 pm. For more information, call (727) 453-6502.

**October 25:** Lube Bat Festival, Gainesville, 11 am—3:30 pm. It's that time of year again! The Lube Bat Conservancy, a non-profit organization that works with fruit and nectar bats, is hosting their annual bat festival. This is a great opportunity to see flying foxes from around the world. FBC will host an information booth for Florida bats. To learn more, visit [lube.org](http://lube.org).

**November 1:** Enchanted Forest Festival, 444 Columbia Blvd., Titusville, 10 am—4 pm. FBC will have a booth at the festival and present a bat program. For more information, call (321) 264-5192.

**November 8:** 6th Annual Estuary Academy, Weedon Island Preserve, St. Petersburg, 9 am—2:30 pm. Theme: “Wildlife of Tampa Bay.” Lectures and workshops throughout the day, including a bat program at 1 pm. Lunch included; registration is limited! Visit [tbeop.org](http://tbeop.org).

**November 13:** Bat Program, Tampa Audubon, Century Buick, 3308 West Hillsborough Ave., Tampa, 7 pm. For more information, visit [tampaaudubon.org](http://tampaaudubon.org).

*For more information on any program, you may also call FBC: 727-710-2287*

### BIRTHING SEASON RECAP: BABY BATS & JUVENILES GET FBC HELP

Another busy baby bat season is winding down! From late April through June, FBC arranged rescues for bat pups around the state. After June, we also received a number of calls about juvenile bats on the ground. This period is a tough time for young bats. Once their moms quit producing milk, the young bats must be able to catch enough insects to survive on their own. Often, when juvenile bats are found on the ground, they are very thin; FBC feeds them for a short while and gives them more flight practice before returning them to the wild.

During the baby bat season, many calls came in from people who found female tree-dwelling bats (Seminole, Red, and Yellow bats) with their pups on the ground. These species often have four pups at a time; sometimes mom and the pups come tumbling down if mom loses her grip. When this occurs, they usually just need to be returned to a safe place in a clump of Spanish moss or behind palm fronds.

Many hours were spent feeding a special milk formula to the pups, then weaning them onto insects. FBC would like to thank its newest volunteer, Fran Prager, for all of her help with the baby bats. Long-time volunteers Polly Kimball, Nancy Neal, and Brianna and Hunter Neal also cared for FBC baby bats. Thanks to everyone who helped this season!



*Two of the juvenile bats given a helping hand by FBC volunteers this season.*

## EFFIGY POTS PROVIDE CLUES TO THE ROLE OF BATS IN SOUTHEASTERN NATIVE AMERICAN BELIEF SYSTEMS

By Margaret Harrison McNutt, Museum Specialist

Because bats are traditionally such mysterious creatures, they have special symbolic value in the folklore of many cultures, including that of the Mississippian Indians of the Southeastern United States (c. 900 A.D. – mid-16th Century).

The cosmos of the Southeastern Indians was made up of three worlds: This World, where humans lived; The Upper World, a realm of perfect order and stability; and The Under World, a place of disorder and change. The people of This World, existing somewhere between perfect order and utter chaos, yearned for stability, with all things classified and in place. The bat was given a special place in the mythology of the people because they were hard to classify and moved between all three worlds.

The beliefs and rituals of the Southeastern Indians often centered on bringing order into a sometimes inexplicable world. Towards this end, everything in This World – both natural and supernatural – fell into a system of basic categories. This World, for example, was populated by three different categories of living things: humans, animals and plants. And there were three major categories of animals. Four-footed animals, such as the deer, were of the This World. Birds, because they could fly, were associated with the Upper World, while “vermin,” such as snakes and frogs, were associated with the Under World.

While all things were somehow related, these categories needed to be kept pure if there were to be order in the cosmos. But there were those beings – “anomalies and abominations” – which fell into more than one category of the natural world. Strange creatures, who crossed the boundaries between worlds held special meaning and figured importantly in rituals, oral traditions and on effigy pots. And the bat – a four-legged animal that flew like a bird – certainly a boundary-crossing beast, is often seen, head, tail and claws, gracing the rim of an effigy vessel.

*For more about the complex culture and beliefs of the Native Americans of the Southeast, read: **The Southeastern Indians**, by Charles Hudson, The University of Tennessee Press, 1976.*

*If you are traveling: Items pictured here are part of the permanent collection at the Memphis Pink Palace Museum, located in Memphis, Tennessee. Most of the items were collected at Mississippian sites throughout Crittendon County, Arkansas. The Museum is one of many cultural and natural history points of interest in the region. Visit their website: [memphismuseums.org](http://memphismuseums.org)*



**Mississippian Pottery  
Vessels with Bat  
Effigies**

**(c. 1000-1500 A.D.)**

Effigy pots are ceramic vessels (jars, bowls and bottles) which incorporate images of humans, mythological figures or animals. Bats are often represented in Mississippian effigy pottery, as are birds, fish, frogs, turtles and other creatures. Effigy vessels and other grave goods were buried with the Mississippian dead.

*Photos: Tamara Braithwaite,  
Registrar, Memphis Pink Palace  
Museum*





Northern yellow bat, *Lasiurus intermedius*,  
roosting on a sabal palm

## CRITICAL BAT ROOST AT RISK:

## FLORIDA SABAL PALMS UNDER ATTACK!

By George Marks

Sabal palms (*Sabal palmetto*), also known as cabbage palms, provide the primary source of roosting habitat for Florida's yellow bats (*Lasiurus intermedius*). Although yellow bats will occasionally roost in Spanish moss, the dead palm fronds hanging down from the base of sabal palms is their preferred roosting habitat.

Unfortunately, Florida's sabal palms are now under attack by a previously unknown phytoplasma (a type of bacteria that has no cell wall). The phytoplasma is transmitted through the plant's phloem, the vein-like tissue within the plant that transports nutrients. It is suspected the phytoplasma is carried by insects, most likely planthoppers. Planthoppers are piercing-sucking insects that feed on the sap within the plant's phloem. The insects spread the disease as they move from tree to tree.

This yet unnamed disease first showed up in the Tampa Bay area in 2008 and there is little doubt that it will spread from there into south and central Florida. The affected trees first appear to be suffering from a lack of nutrients, and then the lower fronds begin to die. Next, a large number of fronds begin to die in the middle of the tree's canopy where there should be only live green leaves. Finally, the spear leaf dies. This means the heart of the palm (bud) has died, and there will be no more new growth. When the last frond turns brown the tree is dead. Because the disease is fatal and highly contagious, a tree should be removed as soon as it is diagnosed as carrying the disease.

If you have a sabal palm that may be exhibiting these symptoms, contact your local University of Florida County Extension Office for advice. Palms die for various reasons, and this is not the only disease affecting them. Management options, like those used to combat the Texas Phoenix Palm Decline, can be employed in urban areas, but the only hope for natural areas is to control the insect that is spreading the disease. It will take some time to determine which insect is the culprit. It may turn out to be a Florida native species, which will create a bit of a dilemma. The sad prognosis for us, and yellow bats, is that we are going to be seeing more prematurely dead sabal palms in the Florida landscape. The only good news is that bats eat planthoppers; perhaps bats will play a role in saving Florida's sabal palms.

*Best practices: early detection will be difficult in areas where palms are severely trimmed. Trimming palms is not a practice recommended by the Florida Bat Conservancy because it robs urban areas of bat habitat. Furthermore, severe trimming is not good for the trees and may weaken their resistance to a number of threats.*

## WELCOME FBC ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, JENNIFER SMITH



Hello, fellow bat buddies! I'd like to extend a hello to everyone and introduce myself. My name is Jennifer Smith, and I was recently hired on as the new assistant director by the Florida Bat Conservancy. I'm very much looking forward to the adventures that will come out of working for the Florida Bat Conservancy!

I have an undergraduate degree in environmental studies from Florida Gulf Coast University and hope to begin graduate school in the near future. I have over four years experience working in Florida ecology and have done extensive work doing species surveys and natural resource management. Just this summer, I worked with Bat Conservation and Management, Inc. (BCM) completing mist netting survey projects in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and New York. The main focus of these projects was searching for the presence of the endangered Indiana bat. Working for BCM involved not only the beauty of handling more bats than I ever imagined, but also the experience of living out of a tent for a few months! Lucky for me I love camping, but I'm not ashamed to say that I'm happy to sleep in a bed again.

Over the summer, I realized that my passion is bats and that I wanted to stand up for the wonderful creatures that are so badly misunderstood. I'm so happy to be here at the Florida Bat Conservancy and look forward to answering your calls and emails, and meeting each of you through our annual events and projects.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS...

**Bat Patron:** Ramona Pletcher

**Bat Friends:** Francine Prager, Karen Allman

**Regular:** Steve Woodmansee, Robert Snyder

## ... AND THANKS TO RENEWING MEMBERS!

**Bat Patrons:** Joy and Larry Linn, Backyard Bird Company, Mark and Tracy Weaver

**Bat Friends:** Ron and Carmen Austin, Shirley Fox, Francia Smith

**Regular:** Kerv Hyland, Janet Hyland, Robert Hoffman, Janice Dabrowski



## BAT FACTS

### Northern Yellow Bat

#### *Lasiurus intermedius*

The northern yellow bat is one of Florida's larger bat species. Its long, thick fur varies in color from yellowish- to grayish-brown. This enables it to be well camouflaged in its preferred roost habitat of dead palm fronds.

**Wingspan:** 14-16 inches

**Body length:** 2.5-3.1 in.

**Weight:** 0.5-1.1 ounces

**Florida roosting preferences:** Solitary.

Roosts primarily in the dead palm fronds of sabal palms, but occasionally roosts in Spanish moss. The practice of trimming dead palm fronds in urban areas destroys habitat for this species.

**Food preferences:** Insectivorous; feeds on beetles, flies, damselflies, leafhoppers, flying ants, and other insects. Often seen foraging around streetlights.

**Reproduction:** Females give birth to one to four pups in late May through June.

**Florida status:** Common.

**Florida range:** Found throughout the state, except the Florida Keys.



HELPING FLORIDA'S BATS

*Florida Bat Conservancy*

*Post Office Box 516*

*Bay Pines FL 33744*

## 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

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