



# THE NIGHT FLYER

## NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY



### OUR MISSION

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

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| FWC Builds Two Large Bat Houses       | 2 |
| Bat Workshops Were a Great Success    | 3 |
| Gothic Club Throws Fundraiser for FBC | 4 |
| Christmas Gifts                       | 4 |
| Member Update                         | 5 |
| Silver-haired Bat Rescue              | 5 |

## GREAT NEWS! FLORIDA BONNETED BAT RECEIVES CANDIDATE SPECIES STATUS

By Francine Prager

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) announced Nov. 6th that they have listed the Florida bonneted bat as a candidate species. This means it is now being considered for classification by the Federal Government as *Threatened or Endangered*. While being placed on this list does not provide any special protection under the law, conservation efforts are encouraged, and funding will be made available for further study of the species.



Photo by Ralph Arwood

USFWS staff said that being able to get the species listed was largely due to the survey work conducted by FBC's own Cyndi and George Marks.

*Eumops floridanus* is Florida's largest bat. Commonly referred to as the *Florida bonneted bat*, it has a wingspan of between 19 and 21 inches, with fur ranging from dark gray to brownish gray and large ears that slant forward over its eyes, giving it's charming face a bonneted appearance.

The species was listed as Endangered by the State of Florida some time ago, but the USFWS did not list it because at that time it was considered a subspecies of Wagner's mastiff bat (*Eumops glaucinus*). In 2004, it was reclassified as a unique species based on the research of Bob Timm and Hugh Genoways. The new species is only found in South Florida. It had always been considered a rare bat but the survey work conducted by the Marks over the past three years has confirmed how truly rare the species is. In fact, some estimates are that the entire population may only consist of a few hundred individuals.

We thank the Marks for their hours of volunteer work conducting the surveys. These dedicated people go out into the forests and swamps of Florida at night, battle mosquitoes and watch out for snakes and alligators, setting up electronic equipment to record bat echolocation calls. From the calls, they identify the species in the area and document their findings in technical reports to state and federal agencies. It is a time-consuming task, but the Marks feel that getting the Florida bonneted bat on the candidate listing has made it all worthwhile.



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## **FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION WORKS PROACTIVELY TO HELP BATS**

### **FWC Constructs Two Large Bat Houses**

As you drive I-75 between Punta Gorda and North Ft. Myers, you will be able to see some great views of natural Florida right from the comfort of your automobile. That's because I-75 runs through the western edge of the Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The main entrance to the WMA is on Tucker's Grade just east of the Interstate. The overpass crossing Tucker's Grade at Tropical Gulf Acres is home to an estimated two thousand Brazilian free-tailed bats, but in the near future it will be necessary to exclude them from the bridge for an upcoming road widening project.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Florida Bat Conservancy, and others have been concerned about where these bats will go when the exclusion takes place. The FWC has been a proactive advocate of bat conservation and added a number of single chambered and triple chambered bat houses in the WMA to support the bat populations. They have now built an 8 foot by 8 foot community bat house based on plans developed by the Florida Bat Conservancy to provide alternate roosting habitat for the Brazilian free-tailed bats in the bridge.

The bat house was completed in May 2009 and we are waiting for the bats to find it. They may like their bridge digs better for now, but hopefully when the exclusion takes place they will know the new bat house is there and adopt it as home. There is plenty of room! The new bat house can accommodate an estimated 40,000 bats.

If you would like to see the bat house just take Exit 158 onto Tucker's Grade. The bat house is behind a fenced area just to the east of the Interstate and is easily visible on the north side Tucker's Grade Road.

A second bat house was constructed at Hickory Hammock WMA along the Istoktpoga Canal which runs between the Kissimmee River and Lake Istoktpoga. This should be a great location for a bat house! Hickory Hammock WMA is located on Highway 98 between the towns of Lorida and Ft. Basinger.



FWC employees Josh Birchfield and Cason Pope at Babcock Webb WMA



The roosting crevices viewed from below the bat house.



Hickory Hammock WMA bat house under construction



## FBC's 2009 TAMPA BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM WORKSHOPS



In January 2009, the Florida Bat Conservancy received a grant of \$7,461 from the Tampa Bay Estuary Program to deliver workshops for environmental professionals in Pinellas, Manatee, and Hillsborough Counties and to conduct sample bat surveys in each county. The purpose of the project was to raise bat awareness with the hopes that bat programs and land management practices would be included in future education and natural resource programs. The workshops lasted a full day each and included presentations on Florida bat species, habitat requirements, bats in buildings, bat houses, and bat echolocation. Participants were able to see some live Florida

bat species up close. At the end of the workshop there was a discussion on how to incorporate bat awareness into future educational programs and land management practices at local parks and preserves. An optional evening session was provided covering survey work and the use of bat detectors. The workshops were held on June 26<sup>th</sup> at Weedon Island Preserve, July 24<sup>th</sup> at Hillsborough River State Park, and August 14<sup>th</sup> at the Manatee County Extension Office. Agencies attending the workshops included the Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management, Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation, and Conservation, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Transportation, Manatee County Natural Resources Department, Florida Park Service, and Manatee County Mosquito Control.

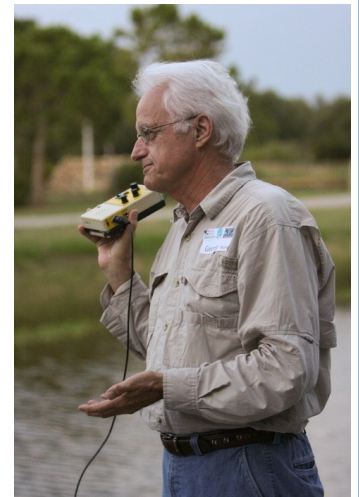
As part of the project FBC also presented a public education program with a bat watch in each county. We are now conducting the sample bat surveys in each of the counties at sites selected by the workshop attendees.

We would especially like to thank Calvin and Polly Kimball for their help at each of the workshops, the Tampa Bay Estuary Program for awarding us this grant, and all of our workshop attendees for taking the time to learn more about bats!



Bat Watching at Emerson Point Preserve in Palmetto.

*Photo by Chris Mikula*



George Marks demonstrating the Anabat system.

*Photo by Chris Mikula*

## GAINESVILLE GOTH CLUB EMBRACES THE FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY

By Cyndi Marks

Raising funds to help bats has always been a challenge. There are no golf tournaments, no celebrity banquets, and no "would you like to donate a dollar to help the bats" at the grocery store checkout line. It would take a very unique organization to adopt bats for their annual fund raising event. And so it was the "Heart of Darkness," a Gainesville gothic social club, that threw the first fund-raising event for our organization!



Jennifer Smith, George Marks, and Allyson Webb represented the Florida Bat Conservancy

Barry Mitchell, the president of *Heart of Darkness*, wanted the club to sponsor a community service project as a means of expanding its social impact. The club's Board of Directors decided that they would like to help bats. They specifically wanted the money to go to an organization that helped Florida bats, so they chose the Florida Bat Conservancy.

The group has a weekly dance at a club called "The Attic" in downtown Gainesville along with other events throughout the year, but this was their first fundraising event. The event was titled "Release the Bats" after a popular Gothic music number.

We learned that the Goth movement started in a London club called the Bat cave and that younger members are called "baby bats." So there is an affinity between gothic culture and bats.

We (the FBC team) decided to dress the part. Our black, glow in the dark T-shirts seemed to be just the ticket, and with a few accessories, we were ready to go. About ninety Gainesville residents and university students showed up in Goth attire. Some even wore bat wings and sported bat ears. They danced to Goth music, visited with each other, bid on the silent auction, looked at our exhibit board, and asked a lot of interesting questions about bats.

A "castle" bat house was donated for the silent auction by our friends at the Backyard Bird Company in Punta Gorda. It is based on a successful bat house design, but modified to look like Dracula's castle! You can see it on their website at [www.backyardbird.com/batcastle.html](http://www.backyardbird.com/batcastle.html). A few years ago several pieces of sterling silver gothic style jewelry had been donated to FBC by Stone and Wing. These seemed perfect for this event and were included in the silent auction. Several members of the club donated items as well. Altogether the event raised over \$600 for the Florida Bat Conservancy. In addition, we met some really nice people who care a lot about bats.

## Order Now For Christmas!



Pettersson  
D-100  
Bat Detector

\$275.00

Support your organization by wearing an FBC Cap! Embroidered logo w/ Velcro closure.



\$12.00



Bats of Florida

20% discount for members!

\$19.96

## Books For Kids!



Hardbacks

\$16.00 each



Just call us and use your credit card to order.

As a member you receive a 10% discount.

Please call by Dec. 18th.

727-710-2287



## MEMBER NEWS

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS...

**Bat Patrons:** Barbara Bolt and Karen Clarke

### ... AND A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR RENEWING MEMBERS!

**Bat Conservationists:** Ralph and Gisela Arwood,  
Friends of Bats/Winged Wildlife Control

**Bat Supporters:** Debbie Fritz-Quincy, Joe Maier

**Bat Friends:** Judith K. Atkinson

**Regular:** William Hilferty, Donna Legare, Native Nurseries,  
Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose Tricoli, Mary Miller, Tom and Jane Pafford,  
Col. (Ret) and Mrs. Charles Dabrowski

## RESCUE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

FBC is looking for at least one volunteer in each county to help with bat rescues and/or bats in buildings. Often, we need someone to pick up a bat and take it to a local wildlife rehabilitator or to help transfer it here to Pinellas County.

Volunteers who handle bats are required to have rabies pre-exposure vaccinations, but rescues can usually be done without having bat contact. You may only be called upon to rescue one bat per year, or help with one bat issue in your area, but it would be a great help to us (and to the bats!). Please email [floridabats@aol.com](mailto:floridabats@aol.com) for more information.

## SILVER-HAIRED BAT RESCUED AT CLEARWATER BEACH

By Cyndi Marks

Clearwater Beach can best be described as a tourist destination consisting of hotels, condos, restaurants, parking lots, and shops with some sand left along the water's edge for public enjoyment. On November 28, we received a call from the life guard station to rescue a bat on Clearwater Beach. It had been found in a small crevice at the beach concession stand. Although some species of bats have adapted well to urban areas, we had never been called to rescue a bat on Clearwater Beach.

Before getting in the car I asked the caller my usual series of questions to make sure it was a bat. I have often driven miles, only to discover the so called "bat" was actually a moth, frog, mud dauber's nest, or pigeon (yes, really!). I was told it definitely was a bat and that it had black fur. Most Florida bats have fur that is best described as being shades of brown or gray. The thought of a silver-haired bat crossed my mind because they are the only bat in Florida that would have black fur. They are called silver-haired bats because the dark fur is often tipped with silver. But silver-haired bats are considered an accidental species in Florida and only three have ever been documented, so I figured it would probably be an evening bat.

To my surprise it was, in fact, a silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*). It is the fourth one recorded in Florida. One was found near the Escambia River in the Florida panhandle in 1985, one on Dania Beach just south of Ft. Lauderdale circa 1992, and one in Bahia Honda State Park in 1996. This species is often found in unusual places such as the rolled-up awnings of RVs or on sailboat rigging, and we suspect the individuals found in Florida have arrived as "hitchhikers." The fact that they show up at campgrounds and tourist destinations seems to support this theory.

The bat had a broken wing which required surgery. We took it to a veterinarian who put a pin in the wing. She is a female and is recovering well. Unfortunately, she will not be able to fly well enough to be released, so she will be cared for by the FBC. A big thanks to Dr. Peter Helmer for volunteering his time to repair the bat's wing! If you would like to learn more about the silver-haired bat you can refer to the write-up in Chapter 5 of "Bats of Florida" or look it up on our website: [www.floridabats.org](http://www.floridabats.org).





HELPING FLORIDA'S BATS

*Florida Bat Conservancy*

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## NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY



### ***You can 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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