



# 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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## UPDATE: THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA BAT BARN

By Selena Kiser

Many of you are probably familiar with the large bat house on the campus of the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville, located on the northwest side of Lake Alice. This house was built in 1991 for bats that were displaced from two sports stadiums on campus. Bats did not move into the UF bat house for several years, but eventually it proved extremely successful. Now it accommodates approximately 100,000 bats; most are Brazilian free-tailed bats, with a few southeastern myotis also present.

Since the design of the original house was experimental, some flaws eventually became apparent. One such flaw was inadequate surface texture, which made it difficult for the pups to cling to the roosting partitions. Also, deteriorating wood combined with the weight of the bats caused some of the roosting areas to collapse in August 2009. New, taller replacements were then added to the aging house, but UF was already thinking about building better lodgings for the large colony.

A second, large bat house, 20 feet away from the original house, was completed in February 2010 and required approximately a month to construct. The new house, called the "Bat Barn," has

the same dimensions (18' x 18') as the original, and also is the same height off the ground (18'). However, there are more roosting partitions in the new house, which were staggered at different heights to

allow the bats more options.

Lou Schilling, a retired architect for UF's Physical Plant Division, and Ken Glover, UF's pest management services coordinator, collaborated on the new design that included removable modules (to make replacement of the partitions easier). Some of the partitions were left open at the top so bats can utilize the attic space above, whereas others were capped off to retain heat better and to reduce the amount of air flow in the house. To trap even more heat, the attic was designed without ventilation.



UF Campus Bat Housing; Photo by Bill Kern

Continued on page 2



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**FBC IN THE COMMUNITY**

*Join us!*

**June 11th and 12th**

**USF Botanical Gardens**

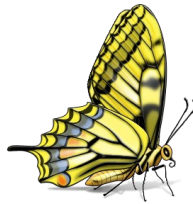
**Butterfly, Herbs & Native Plant Fair**

**Saturday 10:00 to 4:00**

**Sunday 10:00 to 3:00**

**\$5 Admission; USFBG members  
and children 12 and under free**

**Location: 12210 USF Pine Drive, Tampa**



The Florida Bat Conservancy will have an exhibit booth and be selling our great batty merchandise! On Saturday at 1:00 pm we will be giving a bat presentation. Vendors will be selling butterfly and other native plants, herbs and related items.

There will be talks on butterfly gardening, herbs, and more!

And for the kids, there will be a caterpillar petting zoo!



*UF Bat Barn continued*

There are currently no bats roosting in the Bat Barn on a permanent basis, but a few dozen have used it on occasion. However, the Bat Barn may not receive substantial usage until the local population increases. As the original UF bat house took several years to really start attracting a colony, the new one may follow the same pattern. Regardless, having a backup for the original house is important, since it is now 20 years old.

The new Bat Barn was funded mostly by contributions from the University Athletic Association and Bacardi Corp. Approximately \$2,000 was also raised from individual contributions specifically for this project. No state money was used for construction of the new house.

The UF bat houses provide a great wildlife viewing opportunity for the Gainesville area. Come and see the bats for yourself! Parking is available on campus just west of the bat houses on Museum Road (free parking after 5:30pm); Baughman Center nearby also has visitor parking available. A new 8-foot chain-link fence surrounds both houses, but a viewing area allows you to watch the bats emerge at dusk.

*Thanks to Ken Glover, for providing information for this article.*

## COLLABORATION IS KEY DURING THIS YEAR'S STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

As reported by Audubon Florida in their most recent electronic newsletter, there is some good news from this volatile legislative session in Tallahassee! Audubon Florida was successful in working with its partners in amending SB 1290 by Senator Charlie Dean (R-Inverness) and HB 949 by Representative Jimmie Smith (R-Lecanto).

This pair of pest control bills would have given pest control operators the **false impression that they are allowed to exterminate bats in residences**. In fact, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) nuisance wildlife rules govern the removal of native wildlife from structures, and require **exclusion** rather than extermination.

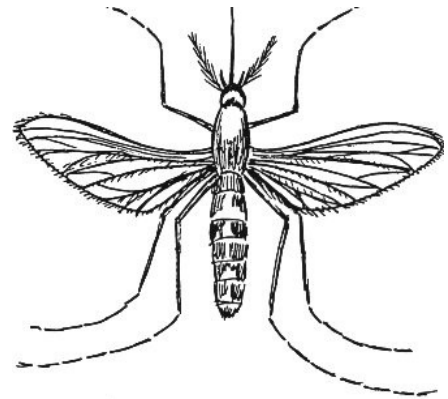
Bats in Florida are species of conservation concern because:

- (1) Several species are **federally or state listed as endangered or threatened**;
- (2) They are slow to reproduce; and
- (3) Their insect-eating lifestyles are beneficial to all of us.

Accordingly, FWC rule only allows bats to be *excluded from structures* (not exterminated), and only outside of the breeding season, so that pups are not stranded in the structures by exclusion measures. Amendments clarifying that bats are not included in this bill, and referencing the priority of FWC rules over anything in this chapter of statute, now will ensure that small business owners *don't get caught between conflicting regulations*, and bats will continue to enjoy their current protections in Florida.

**Thanks to Representative Smith and Senator Dean** for helping to correct the unintended consequences of the bill's original language.

FBC would like to also especially like to thank Julie Wraithmell, Director of Wildlife Conservation for Florida Audubon, who alerted FBC to the bills and worked with us to educate our legislative leaders. In this especially tough time, it is imperative that all conservation organizations and leaders work collaboratively to help make certain that the needs of Florida's wildlife don't get overshadowed. While economies ebb and flow, our actions can impact the environment for generations to come. FBC will continue to monitor this issue and the many others that face Florida bats in the 2011 session.



### THREATS TO BATS EQUAL THREATS TO HUMANS

Concern over the potential impact of current threats to bat species are receiving the attention of many researchers around the world, with intense scrutiny in the U. S. as White-nose syndrome (WNS) and the increased development of wind-power facilities continue to decimate large populations of insectivorous bats in North America. One study in the journal *Science* suggests that **"the loss of bats in North America could lead to agricultural losses estimated at more than \$3.7 billion / year."**

Bats also help control arthropods that are vectors of animal and human disease, like the mosquito. In fact, in Texas, **"an average maternity colony of one million Brazilian free-tailed bats weighing 12 g each could consume up to 8.4 metric tons of insects in a single night."**

#### References:

- 1) *Science*, 1 April 2011: Vol. 332 no. 6025 pp. 41-42
- 2) *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Volume 1223, *The Year in Ecology and Conservation Biology*, pp. 1-38, March 2011



## FBC WILL CONTINUE BONNETED BAT SURVEY IN 2011



In 2006-2008 the Florida Bat Conservancy conducted surveys in south Florida for the Florida bonneted bat (*Eumops floridanus*). Since then, to our surprise, we recorded calls of the Florida bonneted bat north of its known range along the Kissimmee River.

This year starting in May, we will be doing more surveys to attempt to find the northern limits of their range. Also areas in the southernmost sections of Miami/Dade and Monroe Counties will be surveyed. This will include a survey by kayak of the southern coast of peninsular Florida from Naples to Florida Bay and the 10,000 Islands. The surveys will be funded by the USFWS. Also included in the funding is a grant for an educational campaign on the Florida bonneted bat in those counties where the species has been found.

The Florida bonneted bat is listed as endangered by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and is now a candidate species for protection under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The population of Florida bonneted bats may be as low as several hundred bats. Bat houses designed for bonneted bats in southern Florida are proving to be successful for this species so we are hopeful that its numbers will increase.

## EAGLE SCOUT CARRIES ON FAMILY TRADITION OF HELPING BATS

The FBC has often worked with Boy Scouts over the years on various bat house projects, but it was special when we were approached by Ethan Fenner. Ethan is the grandson of George Fenner, a longtime FBC volunteer and master bat house builder. George builds all of the bat houses sold by the FBC and has worked with us on a number of Florida bat house projects. When Ethan said he wanted to build ten triple-chambered bat houses based on his grandfather's design and donate them to the Conservancy, we were thrilled.

Ethan is a member of Boy Scout Troop 382 in Jacksonville, and chose the construction of the bat houses as his Eagle Scout project. He organized a group of younger scouts and had them work with him on the project so they could learn about bats, bat houses, and how to use wood working tools. It took two work days at Ethan's house to construct the bat houses. The houses are now complete and have earned his grandfather's "seal of approval."

FBC will donate these houses to selected parks and preserves around Florida. We are now in the process of looking for locations that will not only be good for bats, but will also be available to the public so visitors can watch the bats emerge in the evening and appreciate these interesting and beneficial animals. If you know of a park or preserve that might serve as a good location for one of these houses please let us know. Our thanks to Ethan Fenner and everyone who worked with him on the project!



Ethan Fenner with completed bat house.



Jacksonville Scout Troop 382 painting bat houses.

## MEMBER NEWS

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS...

**Bat Patrons:** Mary Pittman, Phyllis Benton

**Bat Supporters:** Jerry Fletcher, Bert Lapidus, Christine Jamesson, Ann Cahill, Nancy Moore

**Bat Friend:** Melissa Causey, Ralph and Josephine Woodmansee, Lorene Melvin, Alyce Marie Penia, Dana Schechter, Dennis Hackett

**Regular:** Cathy Murphy, Jane and Tom Karlston, Marie Decker

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

**Bat Conservationists:** Ralph and Gisela Arwood, George and Cynthia Marks

**Bat Patrons:** Carol and Gene, David Redfield, Larry and Fran Norman, Gwen Burzycki, Mark Patterson, Barbara Hoelscher, Edge of the Wild

**Bat Supporters:** Joe Maier, Andy Harrell, Shirley Mogensen, Harry and Meg Edwards, Becky Cafiero, Elizabeth Swann

**Bat Friends:** Rhea Hurwitz, Ann Rebois, Karen Clarke and Barbara Bolt, Cheryl Sandburg, Michele Mann, TJ Coburn, Edward Beatty, Harry and Meg Edwards, Melvin Lauderdale

**Regular:** Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose Tricoli, Jennifer McDuffie

### *Want to do even more to help Florida's Bats?*

Join us for monthly volunteer days at the FBC Office! Help with administrative tasks, planning events, processing memberships, preparing mailings, and more!

#### **Next Date:**

Sunday, June 26th, at 2 PM

#### **Location:**

216a Tom Stuart Causeway  
Madeira Beach

#### **Call for more details:**

727.710.2287

## REMINDER: IT'S BAT MATERNITY SEASON AGAIN!

FBC reminds our friends and family that the period from mid-April to mid-August is bat maternity season in Florida. It is illegal to conduct bat exclusions during this period, as mother bats are birthing and rearing their young. Performing exclusions during this time will create major problems for both the bats and the home owner, as young bats that are trapped inside will eventually starve to death.

This is also the time of year when FBC's resident bat population (those being rehabilitated for eventual release or provided care for life if non-releasable) skyrockets. On average, FBC cares for 34 residents per month, requiring 25,000 mealworms to keep them healthy. Babies and mothers are often displaced during adverse weather events and through human activities, like construction and renovation. In a regular maternity season, FBC may care for 100 orphans in addition to the resident and rehabbing population.



*Photo by George Marks*



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    ☐ 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*