

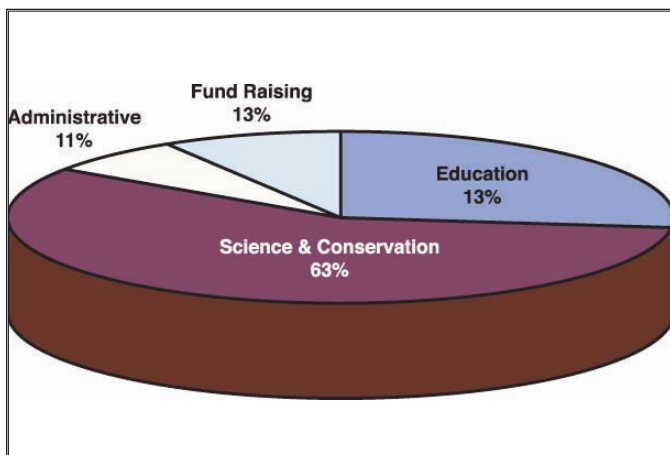


Welcome to the Amazing World of Bats!

Bat Conservation International is a non-profit organization supported by approximately 10,000 members in 65 countries. **We work around the world to teach people the value of bats, protect and conserve critical bat habitats and advance scientific knowledge through research.**

We have achieved unprecedented progress in bat conservation by emphasizing sustainable uses of natural resources that **benefit both bats and people.**

Our members and donors make our conservation successes possible!



Fully 76 cents of every dollar donated goes directly to education and conservation projects.

Why are bats in trouble?

More than 1,100 kinds of bats account for more than a fifth of all mammal species, yet they receive relatively little funding for research and conservation.

More than 50% of American bat species are in severe decline or already listed as endangered. Losses are occurring at alarming rates worldwide.

Bats are exceptionally vulnerable to extinction. Many bat species congregate in large numbers, making them easy to burn, dynamite, or poison. A single act of vandalism can kill millions. They are also the slowest reproducing mammals on earth for their size, most producing only one pup annually.

What can I do to help bats?

1. Join **Bat Conservation International!**
2. **Install a bat house** and watch bats patrol your yard for bothersome insects.
3. Encourage teachers to include bats in **lesson plans** about nature and the environment.
4. Give **bat talks** in your community and invite others to join Bat Conservation International. (We have a treasure trove of slide shows and videos that make it easy for you to correct the many harmful misconceptions about bats!)
5. Teach children the **"look but don't touch"** rule for bats and other wild animals.
6. **"Adopt" a bat** for yourself or a friend to help fund research and education.

EVEN MORE BAT FACTS!



Bats are vital to controlling insect pests

- In Texas and around the world, bats are natural enemies of night-flying insects.
- The millions of Mexican free-tailed bats at Bracken Bat Cave in Texas, eat up to 200 tons of insects nightly.
- If we lose our bat species, we increase the demand for chemical pesticides, jeopardizing whole ecosystems of other animal and plant species, and harming human economies.



Bats pollinate plants and disperse seeds

- More than 300 plant species in the Old World tropics alone rely on the pollinating and seed dispersal services of bats, and additional bat-plant relationships are constantly being discovered. These bat-reliant plants provide more than 450 economically important products, valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually.
- Tropical bats are key elements in rain forest ecosystems, which rely on them to pollinate flowers and disperse seeds for countless trees and shrubs.
- In the wild, important agricultural plants, from bananas, breadfruit, and mangoes to cashews, dates and figs rely on bats for pollination and seed dispersal.
- Tequila is produced from agave plants whose seed production drops to one-3,000th of normal without bat pollinators.
- Desert ecosystems rely on nectar-feeding bats as primary pollinators of giant cacti, including the famous organ pipe and saguaro of Arizona.



What is the truth about bats and rabies?

- Like most mammals, bats can contract rabies; however, the vast majority of bats are not infected, and even those that are normally bite only in self-defense and pose little threat to people who do not handle them. (This is the number one reason to enforce the “look but don’t touch” rule for all wildlife!)
- In the United States from 1995 through 2009, an average of two people per year have died of rabies associated with bats. Rabies is readily prevented by post-contact vaccination.
- The fear of rabies is far disproportionate to the actual risk. To put the risk in perspective: about 386,000 Americans are treated for dog bites each year and about 16 people die from the attacks. Yet we would never consider massive media campaigns suggesting that we eradicate our canine friends.



Fun bat trivia to share with friends at parties!

- Contrary to popular myths, bats are not blind, do not become entangled in human hair, and seldom transmit disease to other animals or humans.
- Bat droppings (guano) in caves support whole ecosystems of unique organisms, and are a popular garden fertilizer.
- An anticoagulant from vampire bat saliva is being used to prevent strokes in human patients.

For more information, contact:

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