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## Bats in the News - New homes for bats in Illinois



The rural countryside around Geneseo, Illinois, seems to be developing into a delightful place for bats. The *Moline Dispatch* of Illinois recently reported that a bat-information community meeting brought nothing but high praise for the flying mammals, and a local group is building and distributing bat houses for just \$10 apiece.

“I just love to watch the way they dart in and fly,” Geneseo resident Joyce Dodge told *Dispatch* reporter Stephen Elliott.

The newspaper described the diversity, longevity and habits of bats, then noted, “They are the living insect vacuums of the cosmos,” with their enormous appetite for pesky insects.

But, the *Dispatch* said, bat populations are declining, and many end up homeless “as natural habitats face losing battles with urban sprawl.” That, says Dorothy Brown, “is why we need to build bat houses.”

The article said Dorothy and her husband, Charles, as members of the Henry County Natural Area Guardians, “are trying to get the county’s nocturnal residents home they can hang their feet on after nights of bug consumption.”

The Guardians, who earlier supported bluebird preservation by building birdhouses, have for several years focused their attention on bats. Charles Henry said 12 bats species are found in Illinois and two – little brown and big brown bats – live in the county.

The group builds bat houses, actively promotes their use and sells them for about the cost of materials to anyone who’ll put one up. Clarence Medley told the community meeting he is extremely pleased to have his own bat house on the family farm. More bat houses, the group agreed, will help preserve the area’s natural habitat and some of its most valuable residents.

You can build your own bat house with proven plans found in Bat Conservation International’s Bat House Builder’s Handbook, or buy a completed and BCI-approved bat house. The Handbook and a wide selection certified bat houses are available at BCI’s online catalog at [www.batcatalog.com](http://www.batcatalog.com).

### All articles in this issue:

#### ► [Bats in the News](#)

The rural countryside around Geneseo, Illinois, seems to be developing into a delightful place for bats. The *Moline Dispatch* of ...

#### ► [Paper, Pencils & Flying Foxes](#)

Take a few hundred youngsters, stir in some unsuspected facts and, for spice, toss in a colorful video in their own language, ...

#### ► [Last Chance for a Workshop](#)

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