


VOLUME 19, NO. 3 Fall 2001



Rabies Scares Continue

In September alone, BCI responded to seven new articles that prompted rabies scares from Los Angeles to New York. In addition, Conservation Information Specialist Barbara French contacted two drug companies whose advertisements promoted fear of bats while providing misleading and potentially damaging information.

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The Bayer Co., in promoting Kiltix, a product intended for use on dogs and cats as tick control, featured “attacking” flying foxes in ads comparing bats to parasitic ticks. When the company declined to withdraw the campaign, BCI informed biologists, bat rehabilitators, and other conservationists of the problem via email. Many contacted The Bayer Co. on behalf of bats, including BCI member and veterinarian Deborah Kemmerer, whose clinic uses many Bayer products. After receiving a large number of complaints, the company indicated they would no longer use the ad.

The Chiron Corporation, which manufactures the vaccine RabAvert, was much more cooperative when approached about their postcard ad featuring a vicious bat. After receiving educational materials from BCI, their National Sales Manager, David Dwight, wrote, “You may rest assured that the content in this mailing won’t be distributed again. Chiron Corporation greatly appreciates the valuable service that BCI performs and hopes you will accept [our] donation to the organization.” A check for \$1,000 was enclosed. BCI appreciates Chiron Corporation’s willingness to learn the facts about bats and rabies and their support of bat conservation.

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