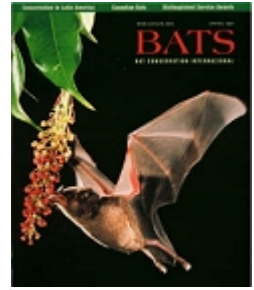


VOLUME 19, NO. 1 Spring 2001

Conservation in Action

BCI congratulates the following 2001 award recipients...

BCI's Distinguished Service Award is presented in honor of extraordinary leadership in bat conservation. The first of these awards was presented to Robert Currie in 1995 for his 22 years of leadership in conserving bats, especially endangered gray (*Myotis grisescens*) and Indiana (*Myotis sodalis*) myotis, throughout the southeastern U.S. Roy Powers was similarly honored in 1997 for his pioneering work in designing and building extraordinarily effective “bat-friendly” gates to protect cave-dwelling bats. Last year, Fred Stabler received this award for his leadership in the founding of two key North American collaborations, the Bats and Mines Program in 1993 and the North American Bat Conservation Partnership in 1999.



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In the Fall 2000 issue of *BATS*, we, for the first time, officially invited nominations for the Distinguished Service Award and for a new Educator of the Year award. We thank our many members and colleagues who so generously took their time to nominate a wide variety of individuals whose special accomplishments are particularly deserving of recognition. All who were nominated received special certificates of appreciation, and we are now delighted to announce this year's award recipients.

Distinguished Service Award

Lars Pettersson,

Inventor

Pettersson Elektronik

Uppsala, Sweden

Lars Pettersson discovered bats nearly two decades ago as a Ph.D. student in electrical engineering at Sweden's Uppsala University. Professor Ingemar Ahlén, one of Sweden's leading bat researchers, suggested that Pettersson work on a project to develop a new type of bat detector. By 1983, Pettersson Elektronik had begun small-scale distribution of Pettersson's advanced designs. “It was not difficult to become fascinated by these small animals,” said Pettersson. “Their echolocation system is extremely ‘hi-tech,’ and particularly intriguing for anyone interested in signal processing!”

The Pettersson detectors are extremely sensitive, allowing field surveyors to detect bats at the greatest distances and tune to specific frequencies or scan all frequencies simultaneously. In addition, researchers are able to digitally record bat calls for later analysis. “Lars' wide range of bat detectors, from affordable mini-detectors to state-of-the-art professional instruments, has opened up the world of bat detecting to people from all backgrounds,” said Allyson Walsh, BCI's director of science and conservation. Walsh has firsthand experience with Pettersson's designs. As former project coordinator of the Bat Conservation Trust's National Bat Monitoring Program, in England, one of her goals was to develop standard monitoring methods for bat populations—an impossible task without such sophisticated detectors.

In 1993, Pettersson began marketing his bat detectors through the BCI catalog. “BCI is

addressing important issues,” said Pettersson. “I am very grateful for the support I've received from the organization over the years, and hope that its members are finding my products useful.”

As Pettersson's work expanded into software development, he introduced BatSound, a sound analysis software, in 1996. Since then, he has generously donated his expertise and the latest equipment to keep BCI's staff on the “cutting edge.”

In addition to his position as chief executive officer of Pettersson Elektronik, Pettersson also serves as an Assistant Professor in Electrical Engineering and Signal Processing at the University of Gävle, Sweden.

Distinguished Service Award

**John Tierney,
Park Naturalist**

*Carter Caves State Resort Park
Olive Hill, Kentucky, USA*

John Tierney began working at Kentucky's Carter Caves State Resort Park in 1968 and joined the park's full-time staff just one day after he graduated from Morehead State University with degrees in biology and geology. He never left. Through his work as a park naturalist and cave guide, he has spent thousands of hours underground and has learned to appreciate the park's bats, especially the federally endangered Indiana myotis.

“One of John's unique talents is his ability to reach people of all age levels,” said Kentucky State Naturalist Carey Tichenor. “One day he may be leading a group of college biology students and their professor on a field trip studying cave ecosystems, and the next he's teaching 10-year-olds about echolocation. He has personal contact with thousands of people every year, teaching visitors about bats while touring the cave environment, which gives park guests a powerful, one-on-one experience emphasizing the importance of bats in the balance of life.” In addition, Tierney has worked to install bat-friendly gates at Bat Cave, Kentucky's largest hibernation cave for Indiana myotis, and has worked to minimize human disturbance in other public caves.

“Over the 30 plus years I've been here, I have spent a considerable amount of time attempting to dispel myths and misinformation about bats in general—especially Indiana bats,” said Tierney. “I feel good about the progress we've made and I am especially pleased with the relationship that BCI and Carter Caves have established to help this species survive.”

Distinguished Service Award

Mark Blosscock, Supervising Bridge Design Engineer

*Texas Department of Transportation
Austin, Texas, USA*

When Mark Blosscock served as a Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) engineer on the reconstruction of Austin's Congress Avenue bridge, he never suspected that a flurry of bat conservation controversy lay ahead. “I first became aware of bats in the 1980s when controversy over the new colony in the Congress Avenue bridge was blooming,” said Blosscock. As 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats moved into the bridge's new, 3/4-inch

crevices, frightened residents petitioned the city to eradicate the colony. “To educate myself about bats, I bought a copy of Dr. Tuttle's book, *America's Neighborhood Bats*. After reading the book, I began wondering if anyone had considered the benefits of leaving the bats where they were to do their job.”

BCI had also learned of the bat colony, and in 1986, Tuttle relocated the young organization from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Austin. “I reasoned that any place with so many bats and such access to the media should prove ideal for our educational purposes,” said Tuttle. Blosscock began working with Tuttle, who wowed a TxDOT Bridge Designer's Conference with the opportunities for highway engineers to help bats and the environment.

Thanks to Blosscock, TxDOT was soon funding BCI's Texas Bats and Bridges research project. He also played a lead role in initiating the Bats in American Bridges study, which included 25 U.S. states. The resulting resource publication has opened the eyes and coffers of many departments of transportation across the U.S. and in other countries. Growing numbers are now collaborating to help bats.

Blosscock lectures nationally and internationally about the values of helping bats. “Every engineer I know wants their children to grow up in a world that is better because of their efforts,” said Blosscock. “I hope that by working with BCI to inform and educate the public, I can help people see bat colonies as partners, rather than pests.”

Educator of the year

**Laura Navarro,
Education Director**

*Program for the Conservation of Migratory Bats
Mexico City, Mexico*

Laura Navarro specializes in environmental education, and currently serves as Education Director of the Program for the Conservation of Migratory Bats (PCMM) in Mexico. According to program leader Rodrigo Medellín, one of Navarro's most impressive skills is her rare ability to communicate effectively with both scientists and children. Her creative talents enable her to transform scientific materials into entertaining educational curricula for children.

One of the program's primary goals is to create and distribute educational programs for use in Mexico's schools. Since joining the program in 1994, Navarro has published four bilingual children's books, introducing schoolchildren to endearing bat characters Marcelo, Valentín, Don Sabino and Lucía, who teach children about bats and why they are important. New books in the series are planned.

“I am especially impressed with Laura's ability to excite both teachers and students with educational materials that are completely relevant at the local level,” said Steve Walker, BCI's associate executive director. “She has also designed bat exhibits, which appear in communities where education about bats is vital to protection of local roosts in caves.” She additionally co-produced five hours of award-winning radio programming about bats that has aired throughout Latin America, and designed a special program to teach people living near bat caves how to profit by making and selling bat-related souvenirs.

“I love working with bats and BCI,” said Navarro. “But my success is possible because of others who work with me. We're a team.”

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