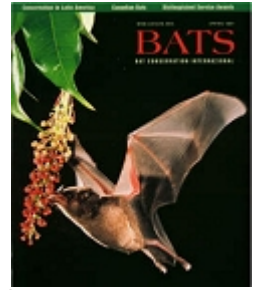


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Letters

I just wanted to let you all know that we thought Merlin Tuttle's last article on rabies [*BATS*, Fall 2000] was excellent and really couldn't have come at a better time. I work at the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History in the cave exhibit, and a majority of my responsibility is taking care of our resident colony of big brown bats. We also do education programs with some of the bats, and our next big scheduled event was in February: "Bats and Rabies-The Biting Truth." We ordered hundreds of pamphlets from your site for this event, and have extensively researched cases of Ohio rabies over the last 10 years (incidentally, most were raccoon/skunk related). Hopefully, we can help pass on some much-needed information to the general public about bat-related rabies, and help debunk the public's fear.

We can't say enough how much we appreciate what BCI is about and how great it is to be a part of it, however small.

— Cavern Exhibit Coordinator, Cincinnati Museum Center

I cringed when I saw your sidebar with 900 annual bicycling deaths in big bold type [*BATS*, Fall 2000]. Just as with bats, the raw numbers don't tell the entire story. The implication is that bicycling is far, far more dangerous than coming into contact with a rabid bat, but bicycling, in turn, is actually safer than driving a car or trying to cross the street as a pedestrian. You could have gone further up the mortality chart to show 6,000 pedestrian deaths and 35,000 motor vehicle occupant deaths. Most bicycling deaths involve individuals who were riding improperly, not following the rules of the road or using lights at night. The British Medical Association found that bicycling gives such a high health benefit that it outweighs the death and injury risk. Come spring I'll look forward to cycling at dusk around a lake in our neighborhood and watching the bats flit about as they work to keep our mosquito population down.

— Mighk Wilson
Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator
METROPLAN ORLANDO
Orlando, FL

Editor's Note: Thanks for your e-mail. It is unfortunate that so many relatively insignificant risks are so easily exaggerated.

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