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Prime Minister of India Enjoys Bat Exhibit

A highly successful bat exhibition was organized late last year in Madurai, India by Dr. M. K. Chandrashekar and his colleagues at Madurai Kamaraj University. Based on their research, it was part of a "New Biology" program sponsored by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India. In addition to being visited by top Indian scientists, the program also was attended by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his wife, who expressed keen interest in the live bats on exhibit.

The exhibition explained how bats capture their prey. In part of the display, Bi-colored Leaf-nosed Bats (*Hipposideros bicolor*) were trained to snatch tethered cockroaches lowered into their cage, and in another, live frogs were captured by an Indian False Vampire Bat (*Megaderma lyra*). Visitors also were able to listen to the ultrasonic pulses emitted by some bats, played back at 1/16th speed.

Dr. G. Marimuthu, one of the research team and also a BCI member, spoke to thousands of school children about the importance of bats. A booklet, "Bats of India", was also produced for the event, in which Dr. Chandrashekar's address and that of BCI was given as a source of information about bat conservation. The exhibition was well attended, and the response has been enormous.

All articles in this issue:

- ▶ [BCI Organizes for Expanded Capability](#)
- ▶ [Board Elects Officers](#)
- ▶ [REVIEW](#)
- ▶ [Fruit Bats: Prime Movers of Tropical Seeds](#)
- ▶ [India's Samanar Hill Caves Saved](#)
- ▶ [Prime Minister of India Enjoys Bat Exhibit](#)
- ▶ [Australia's Flying Foxes Still Need Help](#)
- ▶ [Medal Awarded to BCI Member](#)
- ▶ [Community Bat Awareness Seminars](#)
- ▶ [On the Cover](#)