

VOLUME 7, NO. 4 Winter 1989

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Help Celebrate Bats on Earth Day's 20-Year Anniversary!

In the late 1960's and early 70's many people were aware of a growing need for conservation, and terms such as "environment" and "ecology" became household words. Broad public support for conservation was demonstrated on the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, a massive outpouring of symbolic activities to celebrate Planet Earth. An estimated 20 million people participated in the event across the United States.

Many environmental groups and state agencies are planning festivals to commemorate the 20-year anniversary of this historic event on April 22, 1990. Beginning in the fall of 1989, the Colorado Urban Wildlife Partnership, a coalition of several organizations, started giving programs on bat conservation and soliciting volunteers to build 1,990 bat houses. Calling their event "Earth Night," they plan to erect the bat houses around the Denver area the evening of Earth Day 1990.

BCI member Steve Bissell, head of the Colorado Division of Wildlife Environmental Education Program, said the idea came about in a discussion about what the group could do to participate in the larger "Earth Day" celebrations. Steve commented, "Several people wanted to focus on an issue which was unusual, and I had been giving talks on bats. The two came together. We don't have any territorial feelings about the idea, and anyone who wants can use it!" The group also plans to train volunteers to give presentations about bat conservation using BCI's newest program, "Bats of America."

BCI would like to encourage members to take advantage of the opportunity to include information about bat conservation in their own community Earth Day festivities. Our audiovisual programs and posters can easily be incorporated into many kinds of activities. Use your imagination! Twenty years ago when the first Earth Day was celebrated, BCI didn't even exist, and awareness of the importance and conservation needs of bats was low. This is a tremendous opportunity to include bat conservation in another historic event.

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