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BCI Participates in Pan American Conservation Education Conference

"In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught."-Baba Dioum

THIS WAS THE THEME for the First Pan American Congress on "Conservation of Wildlife through Education" held in Caracas, Venezuela. The five-day conference was held January 23-27 and was attended by 230 people from 22 countries. Patricia Morton, BCI's Director of Education, spoke on the necessity of education for the conservation of unpopular animals. Using bats as an example, she presented strategies BCI has used to promote animals that are little-known and often neglected, yet have tremendous ecological value. The problem of education is particularly critical for bats in Latin America where nearly all bats are perceived as vampires and are the targets of eradication programs.

At the conference, leading educators and scientists in the Americas shared creative ideas and methodologies toward initiating and improving wildlife education programs. The gathering helped establish a Pan American network of biologists and educators striving to conserve native wildlife and the environment by influencing people's actions and attitudes. BCI is now a part of this network and has established new partnerships in several Latin American countries including Venezuela, Puerto Rico, and Colombia. Together we will work to meet the environmental challenges of the 1990s.

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