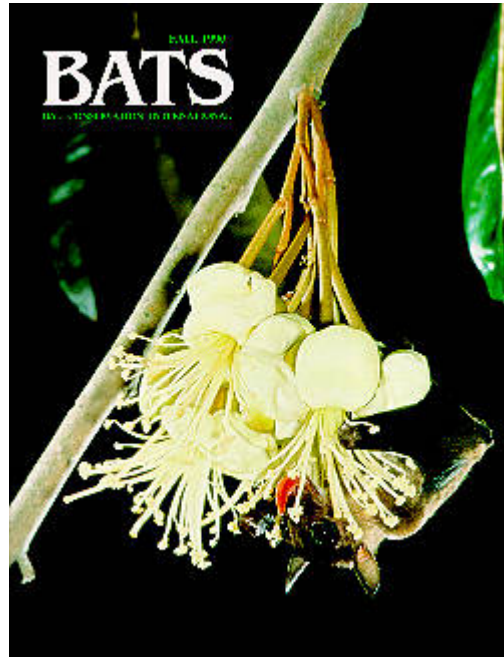


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ON THE COVER

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Dawn bats (*Eonycteris spelaea*) are important pollinators for Southeast Asia's durian crop. The showy white flowers exude a heady odor, attracting bat visitors of several species. Durian flowers open by dusk and begin falling to the ground before midnight. The trees produce a delectable fruit, known by those who have tasted it as the "king of fruit." The great natural historian, Alfred Russell Wallace, once wrote that it was worth a trip to Southeast Asia just to experience this fruit.

Durian is so prized that ancient Burmese kings commanded a fleet of runners, who had to travel on foot over 300 kilometers, to keep them supplied with fresh fruit. And headhunters in Borneo are reputed to have committed murder over it! Today, the market price for a single fruit can be as high as \$7.00 (U.S) or more in Singapore. Throughout Southeast Asia, the durian crop adds as much as \$120 million to the economy each year.

Yet the bats that ensure the durian flowers will produce this famous fruit are in decline in many areas and are not protected by local laws. Recent drops in durian production in some areas may be linked to decline of the bats. Photo by Merlin D. Tuttle

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