

LETTERS

BCI members are the best...

A recent run-in with a bat inside our house led to the acquaintance of a delightful and enlightening member of BCI□ and the world of bats! We wish to express our thanks for her help, enthusiasm, support, and commitment to public awareness of bats with a contribution to BCI in her name. You have an amazing person, putting out the "bat word," in Angie Cromack of Corvallis, Oregon. We are very grateful to both her and her husband for their help. Keep up the good work!

Howard, Susan, Abe, and Carrie Korn
Corvallis, Oregon

Our thanks to Angie and Kermit Cromack and to each and every one of you who helps to educate others about bats. Every time you become an ambassador for bat conservation, you make the world a safer place for bats--and for the rest of us too!

The bat who came to stay . . .

My husband and I have had a bat living on our patio for a year and a half. We checked on him daily to see if he would come home each night. And some nights he wouldn't, but he always returned in a few days.

In late summer last year, we found him on the ground and thought he may be hurt. We called our Toledo Zoo for advice and found that Norma Lewis, their bat authority, was on vacation for a week. So we put the bat in a tall box with a twig he could hang from and gave him a name. My husband hand-fed Bert the bat mealworms. After a few days, he stopped screeching when the box was opened, and like a baby bird, his mouth flew open for more juicy mealworms.

Ms. Lewis checked him a week later at the zoo, and he was in good hands. We left Bert with her for the zoo's educational programs and thought that was the end of the story.

About three weeks later I went out on the patio and found a bat in the same place Bert had always roosted. I called Ms. Lewis at the zoo, and she told me she had let Bert and a few other bats loose because it was a beautiful day to begin their migration. We knew in our hearts that it had to be Bert. He found his special spot after three weeks absence and at least 5 miles from the zoo. Sometime in October he left our house to migrate south.

In May he arrived again, back from his travels. And we were delighted to see him again.
Kae and Gary Heil
Toledo, Ohio

*Kae later reported that Bert the bat continued using their patio for a day roost. They would know when he had a bad night feeding: they didn't find many droppings below his usual spot. On those days, Gary fed Bert mealworms, which Bert eagerly accepted. Male big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*) often roost alone and return to the same spot year after year. If you find a downed bat, handle it carefully and wear gloves; it could be sick and might bite in self-defense.*



Bert, a big brown bat, lives on the patio of two Ohio members each summer.

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