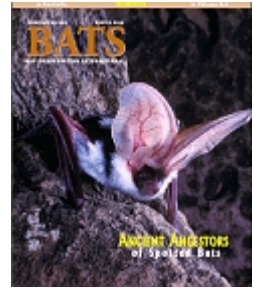


VOLUME 22, NO. 4 Winter 2004

News & Notes

The Ultimate Bat Experience

Sign up now for BCI's 2005 field workshops



 [View PDF version](#)
[2.69 MB]

Extraordinary successes have been achieved in bat conservation, research and education by graduates of BCI's field workshops. Nearly 1,100 biologists, land managers, educators, animal-control personnel and bat enthusiasts have attended these workshops. For many, the experience changed the course of their careers.

And while the workshops are invaluable for wildlife professionals, they are also exciting, informative experiences for anyone who's serious about bat conservation and research.

Learn about bats and their needs, field-research techniques and species identification.

Personally capture, examine and release a variety of bats. And see an array of wildlife and spectacular scenery. BCI field workshops are an unforgettable experience. But space is extremely limited, so sign up early. (Fees include materials, meals, lodging and transportation from the departure city.)

Bat Conservation and Management Workshop – Arizona

Our field location at the renowned Southwestern Research Station in the Chiricahua Mountains features a range of habitats from lowland deserts to coniferous forests. The six-day sessions emphasize bat identification and habitat assessment. You'll catch and release up to 18 bat species in a single evening, then watch endangered long-nosed bats visit hummingbird feeders just outside your lodging.

Workshop leader Janet Tyburec, along with Katy Hinman and Arizona Game and Fish biologists, share a wealth of knowledge on species identification (including echolocation calls), bat conservation, management, education, public health and nuisance issues, artificial habitats and much more. Each workshop features radio-tracking a forest bat back to its roost, watching an emergence of Mexican free-tailed bats from a local cave and learning bat-capture techniques.

Length: six days, five nights. Limited to 15 people per session.

Three sessions: beginning May 23, May 28 and June 2, 2005.

Departure city: Tucson, Arizona.

Cost: \$1,295.

Bat Conservation and Management Workshop – Pennsylvania

The rolling hills and mixed agricultural fields of central Pennsylvania provide a perfect place to see how easily bats and humans can coexist. Many thousands of little brown myotis live and raise their young in buildings, barns, attics and other structures. Nearby mines and caves offer ideal hibernation sites for at least six bat species.

Janet Tyburec and Cal Butchkoski of the Pennsylvania Game Commission provide in-depth information on eastern bat species, public education, public health, nuisance issues and related topics. We'll net, trap and release bats over trout streams and beaver ponds, see endangered Indiana myotis swarming at a mine entrance and watch 20,000 little brown myotis in a spectacular dawn return to their restored roost in a church attic. We'll visit both

summer and winter sites as colonies are beginning to disperse, and we can expect to catch, study and release such striking, migratory species as red, hoary and silver-haired bats.

Length: six days, five nights. Limited to 15 people.

One session: beginning August 14, 2005.

Departure city: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Cost: \$1,195.

A limited number of full and partial scholarships for BCI Bat Conservation and Management Workshops in Arizona or Pennsylvania are available for state and federal biologists, land managers and other professionals with special needs.

Acoustic Monitoring Workshop – Pennsylvania

This year, BCI is offering an Acoustic Monitoring Workshop in conjunction with our Bat Conservation and Management session in Pennsylvania. This special workshop will cover bat-detector hardware and software (including Anabat, Pettersson and SonoBat), call identification, and strategies for developing a monitoring program. Joining BCI's Janet Tyburec will be acoustic experts Sybill Amelon, Joe Szewczak and Ted Weller. The session combines research discussions with hands-on demonstrations and fieldwork. Each night, we will be capturing bats and developing call libraries so participants can return to their home study areas and begin their own projects.

BCI will have equipment on hand, but participants are encouraged to bring their own systems. The Acoustic Monitoring Workshop is an advanced session designed for graduates of previous BCI workshops and/or experienced bat researchers.

Length: six days, five nights. Limited to 15 people.

One session: beginning August 8, 2005.

Departure city: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Cost: \$1,195.

Other News & Notes:

Lighting the Way

Experiencing the awesome emergence of the world's largest bat colony just got a bit more congenial for BCI members, thanks to hard work by a San Antonio, Texas, Boy Scout and his friends. Subtle, solar-powered lights now guide visitors back from the mouth of Bracken Cave.

Corwin Ames says he was overwhelmed the first time he saw the Bracken bats fly out of their cave a few years ago. So, in search of a project for Eagle Scout honors, he decided on an environmentally friendly way to improve the site. Since the bats spiral out of the cave around twilight and guests often walk back to the parking area after dark, Ames wanted to light their way.

With his plan approved by the Eagle board at Scout Troop 809, he worked with BCI's Andy Moore on the details. Andrew McCalla of Austin's Meridian Energy Systems volunteered his expertise on electrical wiring and mounting a solar panel and battery. Ames, several Scout friends and McCalla spent a day mounting the solar panel on the roof of a historic old shed, installing a battery, burying electric cables and placing the lights. If you visit the cave on one of this year's Members' Nights, enjoy the walk – and thank Corwin Ames and his friends.

New Members' Nights at Bracken Cave

Many BCI members requested a little more flexibility in our schedule of Members' Nights to see the incredible evening emergences of 20 million Mexican free-tailed bats from Bracken Cave. So we've added some springtime and late-summer dates for 2005.

Now you can join Bat Conservation International staff and fellow members on March 12, April 2 and April 9 (all Saturdays), in addition to our summer schedule. The earlier dates promise equally impressive flights by the world's largest bat colony, plus a chance to see the Texas Hill Country awash in springtime wildflowers.

Summer dates (also all Saturdays) are June 25, July 2 and 9, August 6 and September 24. Whether spring or summer, mark your calendar for this popular member benefit at BCI's Bracken Bat Cave and Nature Reserve near San Antonio.

Registration for all Members' Nights begins February 1 (and will not be accepted earlier). Space is limited, so please don't delay. Send BCI your name, address, phone number, the number in your party and your first and second choices of dates.

On or after February 1, email the information to bracken@batcon.org or fax it to (512) 327-9724, Attn: Members' Night Coordinator. You may also call (512) 327-9721.

We'll send you a map and additional information with your confirmation.

The 'Anthill' in Iraq

In the last issue of BATS, we carried a picture (left) of a peculiar clay, anthill-like structure at the U.S. Army's Victory Base outside Baghdad. Contractor Ron Ebert said it was home to a number of bats and asked BCI's help in identifying the bats and the "anthill." We offered some possibilities on the bats, but were no help at all on the structure. BCI members, however, offered some ideas.

Member Sue Payne of Council Bluffs, Iowa, who's a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, wrote of "a friend who just got back from Camp Victory. He says Saddam originally built it as a bat house. The area around it had more trees then. Since most of the trees have now been cut down, a lot of pigeons are living in the 'anthill' now, but there are still a huge number of bats living in it."

Homer Hansen of Willcox, Arizona, says his brother-in-law, Jeff Ferro, is stationed in Iraq and had this explanation: "This place used to be a safari refuge/nature preserve/vacation home, so that termite mound-looking 'thingie' was a birdhouse for exotic birds."

John Bishop of Nashua, New Hampshire, suggests, "I believe the large cone-shaped structure might be a dovecote (a pigeon roost). These were common throughout pre-modern Europe and elsewhere," as early as the 13th century. The pigeons were a major source of meat and provided copious supplies of fertilizer. These were typically round, tower-like structures, but sometimes were built as squares or other shapes. Many are today being carefully preserved.

The suggestions make sense. You be the judge ...

Honors for a Friend of Bats

Sally Walker, an American who has devoted her life to wildlife conservation in India, and whose work has been supported by Bat Conservation International, recently received high honors from the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. She was chosen for the Heini Hediger Award of 2004 for "excellent and unstinting service to the zoological park and aquarium community."

Walker first visited India in the early 1970s as a Sanskrit scholar and eventually became devoted to wildlife conservation and to zoos throughout Asia. She was named to India's

national Zoo Advisory Board and founded the Zoo Outreach Organization (ZOO) to work for conservation issues at zoos and in the field. The organization is active throughout South Asia and its impact has spread far beyond the region through monthly publications that Walker founded and edited.

BCI's Global Grassroots Conservation Fund has provided several grants to Walker and her organization for specific projects. Probably the most important was BCI's support for an unprecedented conference that was vital in winning federal protection for two critically endangered bat species – the first bats ever formally protected in India.

The Bat Conservation International Global Grassroots Conservation Fund provides small grants to support innovative bat-conservation projects by local organizations and individuals around the world. To help support Global Grassroots, contact BCI's Emily Young: eyoung@batcon.org or (512) 327-9721.

Bats & Mines in Reno

Bat Conservation International is co-sponsoring a wide-ranging conference on managing abandoned mines and the bats that use them. The session will be May 3-5, 2005, in Reno, Nevada. Topics range from the history of mining in the American West to detailed reports on the most up-to-date options for securing old mines without evicting bats.

The symposium is aimed at wildlife and resource managers, students, researchers, mining personnel and archaeologists. Experts in the field will discuss the bat species that use abandoned mines and how they use them; the latest strategies for surveying bats' use of mines; how to accurately gauge the success of bat-friendly mine closures; and procedures for managing biological resources in old mines. Case studies will also be presented.

The conference – Past, Present & Future: Management of Abandoned Mines and the Bats that Depend on Them – is sponsored by BCI, Christopher Newport University and the University of New Mexico.

For details as they develop, check BCI's website: www.batcon.org.

Another 'Call of the Wild'

The Houston Zoo announced its cell-phone recycling program for Bat Conservation International a year ago (BATS, Winter 2003), with plans to continue it through September 2004. But the response from BCI members has been so impressive that the program is being extended for another year – through September 2005.

The zoo accepts old cell phones, chargers and batteries for delivery to The Wireless Foundation, which pays the zoo. The equipment is refurbished and sold or safely recycled. BCI is the sole recipient of all proceeds from the program, dubbed: "Answer the Call of the Wild – Be a Bat Crusader."

So keep those worn-out cell phones coming.

A phone-recycling bin is located at the zoo's gift shop or cell phones may be mailed to: Houston Zoo Inc. • Cell Phone Recycle • 1513 North MacGregor • Houston, TX 77030

Bat Facts for Brownsville

Donna Berry (right), a tireless conservationist and bat booster in Brownsville, Texas, was a big hit at her community's Halloween festival at the University of Texas at Brownsville.

She set up her popular "bat cave" and a video that clarifies overblown fears about bats and rabies (above) and handed out more than 200 copies of BCI's pocket-sized Bat Facts cards.

"The kids loved the video," she reports, "and the parents liked having a place to sit down

and eat their pizza. The coolest visitors to the booth were four teenage boys who kept asking us questions about the bats on the video. They very carefully placed their Bat Facts in their wallets so they wouldn't lose them. Very cool!"

The Wish List

Your help with any of these special needs will directly improve BCI's ability to protect bats and bat habitats. To contribute or for more information, please contact the Development Dept at (512) 327-9721 or development@batcon.org.

Help the bats of Nepal

The spectacularly beautiful Pokhara Valley of Nepal is home to many bats of 50 or more species – but almost nothing is known about their current status or needs. Conservation efforts, as a consequence, are virtually nonexistent. A Nepalese student seeks a modest grant from BCI's Global Grassroots Conservation Fund to begin a scientific survey of bats in the valley. Sujas Prasad Phuyal plans to interview residents and examine sparse records to initially identify bat habitats, then follow that with on-site surveys to identify species, estimate numbers and assess existing threats. After analyzing the data, the student will issue a final report and conservation recommendations. This groundbreaking study can be financed for just \$839.

All-terrain wheels for Bracken Cave

BCI is restoring 700 acres of Texas Hill Country to its natural, pre-civilization state as a critical part of creating the Bracken Bat Cave and Nature Reserve. But much of the land is rugged and broken in good weather and almost impassable when it rains. Inspecting and repairing the four miles of fence that protect the cave and its 20 million bats is now done on foot. Staffers' vehicles used for land stewardship are simply not up to the task. An All-terrain Vehicle would dramatically improve our ability to restore and care for this important property. A Honda FourTrax Rancher 4x4 with two helmets costs \$4,950.

Finding key bat caves in Mexico

Working with Mexican scientists, Bat Conservation International is discovering key bat caves in northern Mexico as the first major step in conserving countless migratory bats along the U.S.-Mexico border. To study these caves, the Borderlands Project urgently needs \$415 for caver's gear: Petzl Duo head lamp (\$110); 50 meters of climber's rope (\$105); and a complete GGG Frog Harness System (\$200).

All articles in this issue:

- ▶ [Return of the \(Bat\) Mummy](#)
- ▶ [Celebrating Bats](#)
- ▶ [Little Old Man](#)
- ▶ [News & Notes](#)
- ▶ [Protecting Cotton](#)
- ▶ [Nurturing a New Generation of Scientists](#)