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Experience the World's Most Amazing Bats with Merlin Tuttle on BCI Founder's Circle Tours

Last year's Founder's Circle expedition took us to Malaysian Borneo, where we explored coral islands, rain forests, and snow-capped mountains, sighting 184 bird and 61 mammal species. Favorites included the rare banteng, Asian elephants, leopard cats, orangutans, proboscis monkeys, rhinoceros hornbills, crimson-headed partridges, and incredible flying snakes and lizards. On coral reefs, we swam among green sea turtles and identified over 75 species of fish. We photographed rare woolly bats, bizarre Philippine horseshoe bats, and giant flying foxes with six-foot wingspans--in total, nearly a third of the country's bat species. Many of our photographs are the first on record, providing invaluable contributions to science and conservation.

1999 Tour To Venezuela

On our 1999 tour, we will visit another of the world's most ecologically diverse areas. Beginning with the Angel Falls area of the Canaima National Park, we will explore Venezuela's best wildlife-viewing destinations. This park is most famous for its spectacular natural beauty, but its fauna and flora are equally intriguing, protected in one of the world's wildest remaining wilderness areas. Animal favorites include cock-of-the-rock, macaws, a wide variety of parrots and toucans, a diverse array of primates, sloths, anteaters, and of course, bats, including the false vampire (above photo), a carnivore with a three-foot wingspan.

Near Merida, we will investigate giant cacti that rely on bats to pollinate their night-blooming flowers and disperse their seeds, and we are likely to catch a stray vampire bat or two. A little higher, we will investigate the wildlife of pristine cloud forests and marvel at the spectacular grandeur as we cross the high Andes. Here, we expect to see Andean Condors, the largest birds of the New World, soaring on 10-foot wingspans.

In the llanos, our visit to Hato Cedral will provide a cornucopia of bird, mammal, and reptile watching. Famed residents include jaguars and ocelots, howler monkeys, 20-foot-long giant anaconda snakes, endangered Orinoco crocodiles, giant anteaters, herds of capybara (the world's largest rodent), scarlet ibis, and roseate spoonbill. In our last visit to the llanos, we mist netted fruit-, nectar-, and insect-eating bats, as well as fishing and frog-eating bats on our first evening. Don't miss this unforgettable wildlife bonanza!

March 3-12, 1999

Projected cost: \$5,998 (from Houston, TX)

Price includes a \$1,000 tax-deductible contribution to BCI, which entitles you to the Founder's Circle level of membership and benefits for one year.

Travel is arranged by International Expeditions. For a complete itinerary and registration information, contact Arnold Phiher at BCI, 512-327-9721, ext. 26, or via e-mail: aphiher@batcon.org



In the sixties, Merlin Tuttle spent two years leading Smithsonian expeditions to Venezuela in search of bats and other animals. Here he shows off a Linnaeus's false vampire (*Vampyrus spectrum*), which participants on our 1999 trip to Venezuela may see.



The Philippine horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus philippinensis*) was one of 30 fascinating bat species Founder's Circle members saw on our 1998 trip to Borneo.

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