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BCI Highlights

A brief review of some of BCI's accomplishments in the last six months.

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The "BCI Highlights" report appears in the spring and fall issues of *BATS* to help keep members informed about BCI's progress. For more information on the following programs, please visit our web site at www.batcon.org, or call our office at (512) 327-9721. You may also request a copy of BCI's annual report or view it on our web site.

North American Bat Conservation Partnership

- * Completed the first round of projects funded under the Conservation Grant program. With partners' contributions matching BCI's at a 10-to-1 ratio, we supported 19 projects across the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, for a total of \$562,000-worth of priority conservation, education, and research efforts. Currently under review for 1999 are 36 new grant applications.
- * Surveyed an important Mexican free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) cave in the Grand Canyon. Advised the National Park Service on how to recover the cave's dwindling bat colony by reducing human access and removing historic guano-mining equipment from the bats' flight path.
- * Facilitated the October meeting of the Northeast Bat Working Group, a coalition of researchers and managers from 22 northeastern states.
- * Continued sponsorship of successful Cave Gating Workshops. Eleven participants constructed two gates on a cave system in West Virginia that is the largest maternity site in the state for endangered Virginia big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*). Other sponsors included the U.S. Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, American Cave Conservation Association, and the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources.
- * Inventoried bat species at five sites in New Mexico to aid conservation planning for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.
- * Presented the latest imperatives for bat conservation at professional and special-interest conferences across the U.S., including the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting and the National Speleological Society Convention.

North American Bat House Research Project

- * Initiated a new Bat House Certification Program to help manufacturers improve their bat house designs, construction, materials, and installation instructions. To date, nine models from five manufacturers have been approved.
- * Demonstrated through Research Associate testing that nursery-style bat houses (three or more chambers, 15 inches or deeper), mounted prior to 1998, achieved a 75 percent occupancy rate when placed 10 feet or higher on a pole or building within a quarter mile of

a permanent water source.

Latin America Bat Conservation Initiative (PCMM)

- * Sponsored the founding of the Program for the Conservation of Bolivian Bats, the first initiative of its kind in South America.
- * Created a new Spanish-language education kit focusing on bats in urban areas. Pilot-tested the kit in several major Mexican cities.
- * Sponsored conservation research in 12 Mexican states that led to identification and protection of previously unknown migratory corridors and roosts.

Workshops / Education

- * Co-hosted a day-long training on bat curriculum for 40 educators at the North American Symposium on Bat Research.
- * Delivered the keynote address at the International Bat Festival, hosted by Carlsbad Caverns National Park and the City of Carlsbad, New Mexico.
- * Demonstrated how to incorporate bats into classroom and outdoor lessons to 1,000 educators at the annual meeting of the North American Association of Environmental Education.

North American Bats and Mines Project

- * Established a new partnership with the U.S. Office of Surface Mining and signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining future bat protection activities.
- * Installed temperature monitors and completed bat surveys of the Magazine Mine in Illinois with the U.S. Forest Service, the Illinois Natural Resources Department, and Unimin Corporation. Since one entrance of this mine was gated in 1996, bat numbers, including endangered Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*), are increasing.
- * Educated more than 400 wildlife and mine managers about bats at the Mine Design, Closure, and Operations Conference in Montana and the National Association of State Mine-Land Reclamationists Conference in New Mexico.
- * Constructed three gates at the Kiggins Mine, one of the few known hibernation sites for Townsend's big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) in Oregon, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.
- * Surveyed the hazardous Pilot Knob Mine in Missouri, once an important hibernation site for approximately 139,000 endangered Indiana bats.
- * Conducted an inventory of bat species in New Mexico's Socorro Resource Area with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the University of New Mexico, to help BLM managers reduce impacts on bats.

Public Outreach

- * Informed millions of National Public Radio listeners about bats through the live

□Science Fridays□ program. Reached additional millions through a □Dateline NBC□ interview with Merlin Tuttle and the Discovery Channel□s feature on Drs. Gary McCracken and John Westbrook□s BCI-sponsored □Bats Aloft□ research [*BATS*, Fall 1996].

* Gained broad exposure through a variety of print media including the *New York Times*, *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Boston Globe* newspapers; and *Discover*, *National Geographic World* and *Disney Animal Adventure* magazines.

We regret that, given our limited space, we cannot possibly acknowledge all the organizations and individuals who have contributed to these projects. Your support is deeply appreciated.



A maternity colony of more than 100 western small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*) make their home in an underground tunnel at this inactive nuclear reactor in Washington. Bats and Mines Project director Sheryl Ducummon worked with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to construct this exit cupola over the tunnel, which will allow bats to come and go while keeping curious humans out. By choosing to protect this unique bat habitat, the DOE saved taxpayers the \$100,000-plus cost of demolition.

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