



Ignorance remains perhaps the greatest threat facing bats around the world. Myths and misinformation abound. Bats and bat habitats are routinely destroyed because of groundless fears and mistaken beliefs. Education is the key.

Bat Conservation International has emphasized education since its founding in 1982, and its advice and financial support has greatly expanded its educational reach through partners in many countries. In Mexico, an especially effective BCI partner is Punto Verde Consultores – a group dedicated to education, communication and corporate responsibility in encouraging sustainable economic and social development.

With support from BCI's Borderlands Project, Punto Verde recently has focused on educating teachers about bats and bat conservation so they can take the information and materials back into their own classrooms and spread the word to their pupils.

The group's surveys of teachers identified two primary barriers to teaching bat conservation in their schools: a lack of administrative support and a lack of money to purchase teaching materials.

In 2003-2004, in collaboration with the state Ministry of Education and the National Wildlife Federation, the group trained 650 primary and middle-school teachers from both rural and urban schools in the state of Nuevo León. BCI-produced information and teaching materials were distributed. After experiencing the state-certified training programs spread over seven months, Punto Verde says the freshly trained teachers have the potential to reach 20,000 children with the facts about bats.

Punto Verde shifted to the state of Coahuila in 2004-05, training 90 rural teachers through its "Masters of the Desert" workshop. The results indicate the participants shared the information and material about bats with some 4,500 children in 75 rural communities.

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