



A new leader will take the helm of Bat Conservation International on March 1. After a six-month search, BCI's Board of Trustees has named Nina Fascione, a conservation professional for 24 years, as Executive Director. She currently is Vice President for Field Conservation Programs at Defenders of Wildlife in Washington, D.C. Nina succeeds Merlin Tuttle, who founded BCI in 1982 and built it into the world's foremost organization for bat conservation before stepping down last year.

"I have known and admired Merlin for many years, and I am thrilled at this opportunity to help protect his legacy and build on it as Bat Conservation International expands into the future," Nina said. "Merlin cultivated public support for BCI and for bat conservation by correcting myths about bats and explaining their many benefits to ecosystems and economies. I will continue those efforts as we grow our membership, build enthusiasm among our supporters, and create solid partnerships and collaborations to enhance BCI's mission around the world."

"Stepping back from BCI after all these years has been difficult," Merlin said, "but Nina Fascione is an excellent choice to lead the organization into the future and I look forward to working with her. I wish only the best for Nina and for BCI in the years to come."

Nina, with bachelor's and master's degrees in applied anthropology from the University of Maryland, joined Defenders of Wildlife as a program associate in 1995 and rose quickly to leadership positions. In her current position, she manages the largest division at the nonprofit – the fifth-largest environmental organization in the United States, with more than 500,000 members nationwide.

"We are very excited about Nina's enthusiasm and her vast experience in the conservation of mammals and especially her interest in bats during her many years of service with Defenders of Wildlife," said John Mitchell, Chair of BCI's Board of Trustees.

Mitchell also praised BCI's Management Team for leading BCI through this difficult transition, "and especially the performance and tireless dedication of Dave Waldien, who served admirably as Acting Executive Director while still working as BCI's Co-director of programs. Dave's leadership was invaluable during this period."

"I know I speak for the Management Team and all of BCI in expressing our pleasure at the Board's selection of Nina as our Executive Director," Waldien said. "Nina brings new skills and ideas to lead us into the future while recognizing and valuing the many past accomplishments of BCI under Merlin's founding guidance. We are confident in Nina's leadership and totally committed to making the next 27 years even more successful than the first!"

Nina brings a rich range of wildlife experience to BCI, both nationally and internationally. She co-founded the Emerging Wildlife Conservation Leaders program, which provides two years of intensive training for young professionals in wildlife management and conservation. She also worked with a coalition of groups to draft and seek congressional support for the Great Cats and Rare Canids Act to fund the conservation of 15 imperiled species.

And, Nina notes, "I have nearly 25 years of experience in bat conservation and education." She was co-chair of the

American Zoo and Aquarium's Bat Taxon Advisory Group in 1991-97, coordinating strategic planning and implementation of conservation and breeding programs for threatened bats. In that role, she wrote an article, "The Evolving Role of American Zoos in Bat Conservation," that appeared in the Spring 1996 issue of *BATS* magazine. (You can read Nina's article at [www.batcon.org/nina](http://www.batcon.org/nina).)

Bat Conservation International is moving into the future with confidence and enthusiasm as Nina Fascione takes the helm. With the continued support of our members, friends and partners, we will continue to make a real difference for bat conservation around the world.

Experience the bats and wildlife of Trinidad with Nina Facione by signing up for the BCI Founder's Circle Ecotour to this exotic Caribbean island in May. BCI's new Executive Director is joining this memorable trip May 1-9, 2010, to a beautiful land filled with exotic wildlife. The cost of the tour, including accommodations, is \$5,950, and only a handful of openings remain. So act quickly. For information, contact Dianne Odegard at [dodegard@batcon.org](mailto:dodegard@batcon.org) or (512) 663-6936.

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