

Conserving Cave-Bats of the Philippines

Bringing Managers, Communities, and Conservation Groups Together

The 7,107 islands of the Philippines one of the world's top ten biodiversity "hotspots" are home to a diverse and invaluable community of 74 species of bats. But their very existence is threatened every day. Philippine bats are relentlessly hunted as bushmeat, and their cave roosts are lost to improper guano mining, recreational caving and the commercial harvesting of swiftlet nests used in bird-nest soup. Their populations are declining throughout the islands.

Bat Conservation International has been working with dedicated partners in the Philippines since 2006 to reverse the dire threats to these bats through conservation, education and research.

"We buy bats at 3 pieces for 100 pesos. It tastes like chicken and it's big. I think you better stop campaigning against bat hunting because the people still will not pay attention to that. You'll just wear yourself out."

Filipino cab driver, December 2008



The Geoffroy's Rousette fruit-eating bat is a species commonly found in the Philippines and is hunted for food.

The Monfort Bat Cave (video)



The Lucky Bats!

When tens of thousands of bats emerge at sunset or are seen tightly packed along the walls of a cave, their sheer numbers can leave an impression. But bat conservation isn't particularly critical.

We must remember that the bats we see in such great numbers are usually "Lucky Bats" that enjoy some measure of protection at a specific site.

They may be terribly vulnerable at other roosts or along migratory routes. They may, in fact, be so crowded because other roosting options have been lost and this is all they have.

[View the Sherwin Video.](#)

"I have chased bats all over the world and thought I had seen a lot of interesting things before, but I have seen nothing as wonderful as the bats in your cave. I have spent many hours reminiscing about my time spent with those little beasties and I can honestly say that my time spent at the cave was the most profound and truly valuable professional experience I have ever had...it's absolutely amazing!"

Dr. Rick Sherwin, Christopher Newport University

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