

# Water For Wildlife

In the Western United States, the availability of safe and accessible water supplies can be a limiting factor for bat populations. Bats are especially dependent on available water sources, since they sometimes lose up to 30% of their body weight daily to evaporative water loss.

The distribution and abundance of natural water supplies in the West has decreased dramatically over the past century, largely because of expanding human populations and irrigation agriculture.

Climate models predict additional reductions, further threatening these bat populations. As natural sources of water have disappeared, livestock watering facilities have become a critical resource for bats and other wildlife. But since these facilities weren't designed with wildlife in mind, they often trap and drown bats and other animals that fall in while attempting to drink or bathe.

Low water levels, fencing, bracing and other obstructions can impede access for bats, which must drink while in flight from pooled water, and ponds and troughs often go dry during heat waves and drought, when bats' water needs are greatest.

Bats swooping in to drink



This thermal imaging film clip shows thirsty bats swooping in to drink at a livestock trough in northern Arizona's House Rock Valley. Drinking rates of more than a bat per second have been recorded at some of the more arid sites. The sounds you hear are bat detectors picking up the bats echolocation calls.

Bat Conservation International's Water for Wildlife Program was initiated in 2004 to address this critical issue. The Program addresses the conservation of all water sources, both natural and artificial, that are important to bats. We have worked with dozens of public and private partners to improve the safety and accessibility of water for bats and other wildlife on millions of acres of Western forest and rangelands.

We also raise awareness among ranchers and natural resource managers about the importance of bats, and provide training and guidance on water resources.

We work with partners that share our goals of restoring, enhancing and protecting habitats for bats, amphibians and a multitude of other wildlife.