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Thank you!

BAT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

The mission of Bat Conservation International is to protect and restore bats and their habitats worldwide. Bat Conservation International is committed to:

- **Education:** Teaching people to understand and value bats as essential allies.
- **Conservation:** Protecting critical bat habitats and encouraging others to join in our efforts.
- **Research:** Advancing scientific knowledge about bats, their conservation needs, and ecosystems that rely on them.
- **Win-Win Solutions:** Relying on non-confrontational approaches that help both bats and people. Visit us online at:

<http://www.batcon.org>



Bat info by phone!
← Call Inside Line and punch in 3636 to find out when the bats are flying.

Can I get rabies from a bat?

The rule is this: **Don't ever touch a bat!** Less than one-half of one percent of bats contract rabies, but when you see a bat on the ground, it's likely to be sick or injured. No one has ever gotten rabies from bats at the Congress Avenue Bridge. But don't take any chances. Remember the rule: **Don't ever touch a bat!** (If you see a bat on the ground in a place where it could have contact with pets, children or other people, tell them to stay away and call Animal Control at 3-1-1 or Wildlife Rescue at 472-WILD.)



Fun Facts About Freetails

- With tail winds, freetail bats can travel up to sixty miles per hour.
- Freetails can fly up to 10,000 feet high, catching migrating corn earworm moths.
- Freetail poop ("guano") was once commonly used to make gunpowder, and it is still widely used as fertilizer.
- Freetails may travel up to fifty miles away to find food.
- Twenty million freetail bats spend their summers at San Antonio's Bracken Bat Cave, the largest roost in the world.
- Freetails, like all bats, are not blind. They do use echolocation to hunt their prey, however.
- Freetails can travel 1,000 miles when they migrate.
- A small number of bats sometimes stay in Austin all winter.

← These freetail bats love their snuggly roost in the Congress Avenue Bridge!

BAT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL &
www.batcon.org

Austin American-Statesman
statesman.com

Freetail Flyer

News and information about the world's largest urban bat colony – Summer 2006

Before the sun rises tomorrow morning, the bats streaming out from under the Congress Avenue Bridge will have eaten fifteen tons of flying insects! Tomorrow night, they'll do it again. All summer long, Mexican free-tailed bats are hard at work, making your world a better place to live.

Yummy bugs

A favorite food of our freetail friends is the corn earworm moth, one of the most destructive crop pests in the country. In fact, in terms of pesticide use, the corn earworm is second only to the boll weevil. Can you imagine how many pounds of pesticides would be needed if it weren't for the bats eating fifteen tons of these insects every night? And don't forget that the Congress Avenue Bridge is just one bat colony—the total summer population of freetail bats in Central Texas is probably over 100 million bats. All told, these freetail bats eat 1,000 tons of insects nightly, if not more!

Like our freetail bats, corn earworm moths migrate north from Mexico. Scientists think bats spend their summers in Texas partly because of these pests. If you're a bat, it turns out that Texas is a good place to catch a late-night snack of tasty, migrating moths.

Mommies unite!

Large numbers of bats arrive in Austin in early March, migrating north from their winter roosts in Mexico. The Congress Avenue Bridge is what bat scientists call a *maternity roost*, because almost all of the bats that come to the bridge every spring are female, and they raise babies there. Each mother bat

gives birth to a single baby bat, called a *pup*, in June. The babies can fly and hunt on their own in about six weeks. About half of the baby bats will live to adulthood.

By mid-August, there are about 1.5 million bats living under the Congress Avenue Bridge, making it the largest urban bat colony in the world.



In danger???

In the last twenty years, scientists have found an alarming number of freetail roosts in Texas and Mexico that are nearly abandoned. Scientists are continuing to study freetail ecology and behavior, and Bat Conservation International is working hard to find and protect their remaining roosts.

Since our freetail bats migrate between Texas and Mexico, working on both sides of the border is essential. This past winter, BCI worked with local landowners, educators, and conservation scientists in northern Mexico to reopen and protect some of the largest roosts for migrating freetail bats. But we couldn't do it without you—the support of our BCI Members makes all our work possible!

Bats in Bridges

Did you know that the Congress Avenue Bridge is not the only bridge to have bats? Far from it! Hundreds of bridges across the U.S. have seasonal or even year-round bat colonies. Many shelter freetails, but quite a few other bat species use bridges too. What makes our bridge so unusual is the huge size of the colony it shelters.

Another large maternity colony lives in the IH-35 overpass at McNeil Road in Round Rock. That freetail colony may be almost as big as Austin's.

Bats began roosting in the Congress Avenue Bridge in the early 1980's, shortly after it was renovated. Few people understood how valuable the bats were, and many feared them. It took a lot of effort by Bat Conservation International and other bat-friendly folks to help turn the tide of public opinion. Today, Austin loves its bats, and this international tourist attraction brings more than *eight million dollars* into the local economy every year!

Other cities are following Austin's lead. In May, 2006, a Houston coalition of nonprofits and city and state officials unveiled a new bat-viewing area at the Waugh Drive Bridge.

At bridges like these, bats roost in narrow, structural crevices. At some other bridges, people install bat houses. Some bridges shelter huge colonies, and others shelter much smaller ones. In every case, the bats are good for the environment, and are often good for the economy as well.

Join us for these other batty activities in Austin:

Friday, July 28th, 2006:



Save the date for the **Bat Run** family 5k
Visit RunTex online to register: www.runtex.com

Saturday & Sunday, September 2nd & 3rd, 2006:

★ Bat Fest ★

Art, music and family fun on the
Congress Avenue Bridge
Brought to you by Roadway Productions

Ongoing:

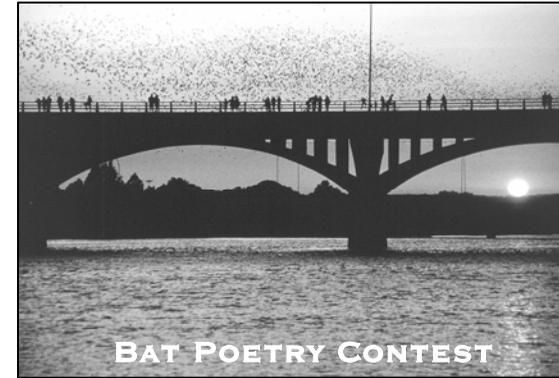
Take a Bat Cruise
On the Lone Star Riverboat — Call 512-327-1388

or

Go on a Bat Float by kayak
With REI — Call 512-343-5550

Top 10 things to do while you're waiting for the bats:

1. Draw a cartoon of bats feeding on crop pests at 10,000 feet.
2. Read more about bats at the information kiosks.
3. Share stories of bat sightings with your friends and family.
4. Sing the theme to the old *Batman* TV show... quietly.
5. Call someone in another city to brag about watching bats.
6. Fill out a BCI membership form and help us save the bats.
7. Play a game of "Echo-Locate" (played like "Marco Polo").
8. Count how many different tree or bug species you see.
9. Compose a poem about bats (see contest, page 3).
10. Talk to a complete stranger about bats, and make a new batty friend!



RESTLESS CHITTERING
DAY ENDS, EVENING APPROACHES
TIME FOR EMERGENCE

Have you got a bat poem in you? Enter our poetry contest and win a free year's membership to BCI! Deadline is Aug. 15th, 2006. Submit via email to batbridge@batcon.org.

Winning entries will be posted on BCI's website, www.batcon.org.



Tips for Better Bat Watching

For the best bat viewing, watch from the *Austin American-Statesman's* Bat Observation Center. The Center offers educational kiosks year-round and bat educators from Bat Conservation International on weekend nights in June, July and August. You can get nice views of the long columns of emerging bats from atop the bridge itself. Boat tours are also available from several companies. You can park for free in the *Statesman's* lots after 6 p.m., but *please follow designated paths to the Bat Observation Center, and stay clear of industrial areas.*

The bats emerge around sunset, but the time varies from night to night, depending on the weather. Loud noises and bright lights from video cameras may delay their emergence.

Call the *Statesman's* **Inside Line** at 512-416-5700, code 3636, for the most recent information on emergence times.

BAT CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL
www.batcon.org

This year, we...

- Conducted key research through the Bats and Wind Energy Cooperative that provided the first insights into how to prevent bat kills at wind power facilities;
- Published the book, *Murciélagos Cavernícolas del Norte de México*, an invaluable resource for educating Mexican land managers on bat values and conservation needs;
- Taught eight bat conservation workshops, attended by 279 participants representing 26 government and 20 private organizations all over the world;
- Funded research on how to provide safe water for western American bats whose survival is increasingly threatened by inappropriately maintained livestock tanks;
- Led a workshop, co-sponsored by state and federal agencies, on gating techniques for protecting essential bat colonies in mines of the western U.S.;
- Built bat-friendly gates to protect three of the most important remaining bat roosts in mines of Arizona and California;
- Conducted research on hibernation requirements of the endangered Indiana bat that helped set new recovery priorities for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Continued major habitat restoration and provided new water resources at the Bracken Bat Cave & Nature Reserve, home of the world's largest remaining bat colony;
- Provided 12 graduate student scholarships for conservation-relevant research on bats from the U.S. and Costa Rica to Greece and Madagascar; and
- Sponsored bat conservation projects in Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Madagascar, Pakistan and more.

...and we need your help!

Become a BCI member today at

www.batcon.org