





# Bats matter! Staff training guide


The attached document is designed to get you started talking with your customers about bats. In the face of all the bad news surrounding bats (see NCA WNS poster and brochure for more information on this deadly disease), the best thing we can do is educate the general public, our school, youth and senior groups or any other visitors to our caves about bats. We fear the things we don't understand, and, for most people, bats are certainly one of those things. Here are some ideas (refer to handout on next page as you read this):

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**Did you know?** This section begins the education process by starting a conversation about bats that attempts to familiarize your audience with bats. These fun facts are there to generate ideas for discussion with your audience.

 Facts presented in a fun way build confidence and encourage further investigation. People, kids especially, like to feel smart. Knowledge leads to a sense of control over the subject being learned – in this case bats.

 Most people don't understand the basic lifecycle of a bat let alone it's economic importance. Facts like this help get the ball rolling – follow up with an illustration of the lifecycle of a bat.

 It's important to remember that because bats are active after dark, this works against them becoming our furry friends. Start a conversation about this.

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**Get started** Let's not reinvent the wheel. There are a plethora of wonderful resources out there created by people who know a whole lot more about bats and bat education than most of us (at least speaking for myself). Let's use those websites to pick out one or two activities that each of us feels we can implement. Be careful to make sure they are age appropriate, and fit within the time frame allowed. Now, read over the handout that follows and get started on your own bat education!



# Bats matter!

And this is why... Bats are one of the most important and misunderstood animals on the planet. There are almost 1000 species of bats with a huge variety of living conditions, diet and habits. They are fascinating creatures and we need to protect them.

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## Did you know?



One female little brown bat - with a body less than the length of your thumb - can eat its body weight in insects in one evening.



In one summer, the 150 bats in an average colony of big brown bats can conservatively eat 38,000 cucumber beetles saving corn farmers as much as \$1 billion a year.



Bats and birds work together to control insect populations—birds take the day shift, bats take the night shift!

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The first step in helping bats is to **understand** them. Because they “operate” mostly during the evening and night time hours, we don’t see them and interact with them like we do our day time animal friends - such as birds. Just as we build bird houses to encourage our feathered friends to live nearby, we need to build **bat houses** to encourage our flying mammal friends to live nearby. You’ll start to notice the benefits immediately – less mosquitoes and a better ability to stay outside later in the evening! (Here we come lightning bugs!)

**Get started** There are several great websites that provide a wealth of information, activities, teacher guides and reference material for those who want to incorporate bat education into their curriculum. Check out these websites to get you started:

<http://www.edtech.kennesaw.edu/web/bats.html>

<http://animals.pppst.com/bats.html>

<http://www.edtech.kennesaw.edu/web/bats.html>