



Lubee Bat
CONSERVANCY

Lubee News

Fall 2006

No. 6

Community Notes and Calendar of Events

October 28th, 2006

Saturday, 12:30-3:30 pm
Lubee Bat Festival

November 2nd, 2006

Fruit Bat Husbandry Workshop

More information about Lubee events open to the general public, as well as scheduling for our education programs can be found by emailing us at info@lubee.org

For information about bats in Florida, visit Florida Bat Conservancy (formerly Florida Bat Center) www.floridabats.org

Contributors to "Lubee News"

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Visitors to the 2nd Annual Florida
Bat Festival at Lubee

Do you enjoy receiving **Lubee News** and are not yet a member of Lubee? Please log on today to www.Lubee.org and become a Friend of Lubee and help support fruit and nectar bat conservation.

Florida Bat Fest Takes Flight!

Turning bat notions upside down.

Good news – the Bat Festival movement within the USA is growing! While Halloween is traditionally a time to fear the spooky side of bats, it also presents a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the beneficial side of bats and campaign to Save our Nightlife!

The 2nd Annual Florida Bat Festival was held on Saturday, October 28th 2006 at Lubee Bat Conservancy, drawing a crowd of over **750** people from the greater Gainesville area and North Central Florida. Visitors came from as far away as St Augustine, Fort Myers, and Orlando, to spend an afternoon meeting the gentle giants of the bat world. The event is a free one-day educational event for families and folks of all ages, which includes a tour of Lubee Bat Conservancy and the unique opportunity to see live fruit and flower bats from the Old and New World tropics.

While having fun, visitors were amazed by the 5ft wingspans of some of Lubee's giant bats, and learned about the important role of bats in agriculture and rainforests around the world. Presentations by Dr Allyson Walsh (Director) and Dana LeBlanc (Curator) included an Introduction to Bats, Bats as Pollinators, and The Bats of Flor-

ida. Additional information was presented about ways that homeowners can avoid conflicts with bats and how maintaining healthy bat habitats benefits other Florida plants and animals.

Florida Bat Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, The Sierra Club, 4-H, and the Florida Native Plant Society were among the groups that joined us for the festival and set up their displays and information. Grandiflora and Florida Wildflowers, Inc. sold native plants and seeds at the festival and distributed information on creating wildlife friendly habitats in your backyard. Volunteers ran craft and activity areas for kids, including "Come Play the Animal Way" to teach kids about enrichment activities for the bats at Lubee, along with ideas for their pets at home.



Bat Fest (Cont. on pg 2)

International bat conservation community unite to campaign against culling of Mauritian Fruit Bats

In September, Lubee received a visit from Drs Carl Jones and Paula Senior, who are working with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust on the island of Mauritius to help protect the endemic *Pteropus niger*, the Mauritian Fruit Bat. Dr. Jones, who has worked on the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues since 1979, played a pivotal role in helping to save the Mauritius kestrel, pink pigeon, echo parakeet, and various species of plants from almost certain extinction, as well as restoring the offshore islands of Ile aux Aigrettes and Round Island to their native flora and fauna. His and others work has been an important component of the success of the Rodrigues Flying Fox in re-

covering some of their numbers in the wild. Those populations were recently estimated at almost 4,000, up from around 70 when the program began in the 1970's.

The Mauritian government has over the last two decades developed an international reputation for its conservation and animal welfare work through the recovery of the Rodrigues Flying Fox, which is the classic case of a fruit bat conservation and recovery program. However, based on recent pressure from commercial fruit growers, the Mauritian government is considering lifting the protections on the Mauritian Fruit Bat

(Cont. on pg 2)

Bat Festival (Cont. from P1)



There were also opportunities to participate in mask-making crafts, batty face-painting, a belly dancing performance, and of course viewing the magnificent bats!

Donations of fruit from The Garden Wholesale & Produce Distribution Center allowed Lubee keepers to create spectacular edible pumpkin sculptures for the bats, entertaining both bats & visitors. Volunteers from the University of Florida Department of Wildlife and Ecology and Conservation and elsewhere helped man tables and guide guests around the Bat Center. Florida Bat Fest event coordinators Michelle Seitzmeir and Sarah Purcell, convinced many local business to join the campaign to "Save Florida's Nightlife" by generously providing chance drawing prizes.

Comments about the festival include "It's the best place we've ever been" and "We'll be home late; we can't get the kids to leave". If you would like to become a partner and/or sponsor of Florida Bat Fest 2007, and join the campaign to "Save Florida's Nightlife", please contact Michelle or Sarah at info@lubee.org. The Florida Bat Fest is just one of several edu-

cational bat festivals now held annually across the United States. Other bat festivals include:

International Bat Festival, held at Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico – A Sunrise Bat Flight breakfast, a barbecue, arts and crafts booths, an International Bat Festival Parade and a sunrise balloon launch on the Pecos River, plus a lantern tour of Carlsbad Caverns and educational programs about bats.

Austin Bat Fest, held in Austin, Texas – Arts, crafts, music, food, bat watching, children's activities, and educational displays. Estimated attendance is around 20,000!

Annual Great Lakes Bat Festival, held in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan - Experts from around the Great Lakes Region converge on the Cranbrook Institute of Science to promote bat conservation thru presentations about bat benefits, bat houses, bat research, bat conservation, and much more. Live animals are shown, including over a dozen different kinds of bats from around the Great Lakes and the world.



2nd Annual Florida Bat Festival at Lubee

We would like to thank all the businesses that helped make the Florida Bat Fest such a success in 2006:

Hippodrome State Theater
Sweetwater Organic Coffee
Skate Station Fun Works
Cabana Cove Caribbean Grille
Starbucks Coffee Company
Alley Katz Corner
Lowe's
Romano's Macaroni Grill
Earth Pets
Harry's Seafood Bar & Grill
Coffee Culture
PetSmart
Hip Moves
Wild Birds Unlimited
O2B Kids
Target Copy
Artistic Decisions Bonsai
Ivey's Grill
Signs by Tomorrow
Renaissance Printing
Gator Textbooks
Alternatives Global Marketplace

Join us again in 2007!

Mauritius (cont from P.1)

and allowing controlled culling of the bats. Not only would this affect the Mauritian Fruit Bat, which is endemic to Mauritius and is considered vulnerable by the IUCN, but it could lead to future similar conflict resolution issues for the Rodrigues Flying Fox, an Alliance for Zero Extinction species. The bats on Mauritius are primarily threatened by habitat loss, sport hunting, and cyclonic damage to their roosts, but are largely able to maintain a fairly stable population. The Mauritian government, however, received population estimates from the fruit growers which are likely inflated because they were based on roost sites, rather than colonies. Since colonies often travel to different roost sites, this can lead to the same colony being counted multiple times, creating a misleading over-estimation of current populations.

Fruit growers allege that the fruit bats alone are responsible for the damage to their crops, and that culling is the only available means to stop that. There is a high likelihood that other animals, including birds and rodents are also partially responsible for crop

damage, making culling the bats an ineffective solution. Many studies on fruit bat fruit depredation in Australia and elsewhere over the last 75 years has shown that culling of fruit bats is largely ineffective and does not solve the problem.

As a result, Lubee, along with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, the Philadelphia Zoo, BCI, the IUCN Chiroptera Specialist Group, and others have joined to ask the government of Mauritius to delay the proposed culling until more accurate population counts can be taken and a better assessment of the fruit predation problem can be made. A study on bat predation of litchis in Madagascar will begin in December 2006, and comparable data from Mauritius would help resolve unanswered questions about the conflict between fruit bats and fruit growers. Lubee, along with these other groups, has offered to support this work. You can help by making a donation to Lubee - 100% of our member donations go towards conservation programs such as these.

Lubee receives AZA CEF–Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund Grant for Madagascar Fruit Bat Tree of Life Study

Did You Know?

British biologist and inventor, Richard Dryden, conceived of a design for sails based on the bat wing. His idea is based on the fact that birds and bats change the geometry of their wings to best suit wind conditions. If it is too gusty, they will fold in their wings and become more streamlined, whereas in low winds, they extend their wings fully to catch as much air as possible. Translating this to boats, Dryden has designed sails like bat wings- with masts that are jointed and can change shape, and an elastic sailcloth that ensures that the surface of the sail remains taut at all times. In the May issue of Popular Science, his design was featured as a prototype for supplementing freighters and cargo ships with wind power, potentially saving them up to 35% in fuel costs. The idea is for shipping companies to purchase these modular, bat-wing sails, which are kept on deck in containers and used only in good weather conditions. The 130' masts are trimmed and rotated by computers that monitor wind speed and direction, thereby removing the need for extra staff, and allowing the ship to retract the masts in order to pass under bridges and in ports. He is currently working on wind-tunnel tests and expects to see these become available in 5 years.



Popular Science, May 2006

In the fall of 2006, the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, together with the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund, awarded over \$310,000 in grant funding to support conservation, scientific, and educational programs by AZA members and partners. Seventeen projects received funding this year, and among them are two bat conservation projects: "Pollination Ecology and Fruit Bat Conservation in Madagascar; Lubee Bat Conservancy" and "Mariana Islands Birds and Bats Teaching Kits; Philadelphia Zoo". Both grants provide a valuable opportunity to develop and unite ongoing bat conservation efforts in the Western Indian Ocean and Pacific regions.

In the Mariana Islands, Lubee donated funds in 2005 to Philadelphia Zoo to help send the educator from Rodrigues to the Mariana Islands to begin to implement the transfer of Western Indian Ocean bat conservation education programs to the Pacific.

In Madagascar, the CEF-DWCF grant will provide the opportunity to galvanize field conservation for two species of endemic and threatened Malagasy fruit bats by producing and using research data extolling the ecological role of the bats. Madagascar's three species of endemic fruit bats play an important role in shaping Madagascar's distinctive

landscape through pollen transfer and seed dispersal of endemic flora. All three species are threatened from heavy and sustained hunting as bushmeat, which is legal in Madagascar, and destruction of, or disturbance at their roosts. Since 2003, Lubee has supported conservation science projects run by "Madagasikari Voakajy", a national organization working to protect the threatened bats of Madagascar, including a pioneering conservation initiative engaging local volunteers in monitoring bat roost sites. This new Madagasikari Voakajy field project will focus on the role of two endemic fruit bats as pollinators of two species of endangered baobab trees. Because of their roosting needs and effects of human disturbance, most fruit bat colonies are located some distance (e.g. + 15 km) from protected baobab forests. The importance of these outlying roosting sites will be assessed by carrying out nocturnal observation of fruit bat and lemur visits to flowering baobabs and by radio-tracking individual bats. Surveys of roosts inside and outside candidate protected areas will give an unprecedented understanding of the connective landscape ecology of Malagasy fruit bats, leading to targeted conservation of these sites and possible revision of preliminary park boundaries to include these outlying, threatened fruit bat colonies.

Visit the new bat exhibit at Columbus Zoo!

11 Large Flying Foxes and 4 Little Golden-mantled Flying Foxes like the two pictured here on the right, traveled from Lubee to Columbus, OH for the opening of the new fruit bat exhibit at Columbus Zoo.

The new exhibit should open to the public before Christmas. For more information, please visit their website at www.columbuszoo.org



Three Ways You Can Help!

Donate your old printer cartridges and cell phones to Lubee

Lubee receives a donation for each cartridge or cell phone sent in. If you live outside of Gainesville, a prepaid shipping label will be mailed to you. Local donations can be dropped off at several locations around town. Please email us at info@lubee.org for more information.

Log on to our website, www.Lubee.org and become a Friend of Lubee.

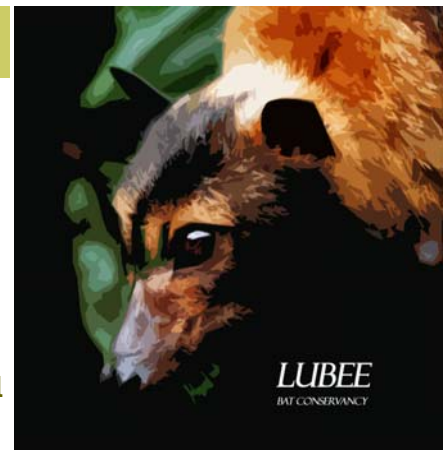
All donations are tax-deductible and 100% of your contribution goes towards our conservation programs.

Visit Organic Bouquet, the world's first online organic florist, through Lubee's website and Lubee will receive a 10% donation for each order of organic flowers received. Please note that Lubee only receives credit for the purchase if you get to their website through Lubee's, so be sure to visit www.Lubee.org and click on the Organic Bouquet link.

LUBEE BAT CONSERVANCY

Saving Bats Conserving Ecosystems

Lubee Bat Conservancy is an international non-profit organization working with others to save fruit and nectar bats and their habitats through conservation, research, and education. Healthy ecosystems depend on fruit and nectar bats that pollinate flowers and disperse seeds. These bats are among the least studied and most threatened in the world. Lubee is working to promote understanding and responsible management of the vital relationship between bats, plants, and people, leading to a sustainable future for all.



The Challenge

Fruit and nectar bats visit plants for their food and are vegetarians. While feeding they perform important ecological functions for the plants, sharing the role of seed dispersal and pollination with birds and insects. In rainforests, these bats play a vital role in forest regeneration and the maintenance of forest diversity. In some island countries, they are often the only native mammal and are of cultural and economic importance to local people dependent on natural forest for protection, water, timber, and other forest products.

It is estimated that more than 134 plants that yield products used by humans are entirely or partially reliant upon bats for seed dispersal or pollination. Fruit & nectar feeding bats are important pollinators of many wild as well as agricultural plants such as mangoes, cashew nuts, figs and columnar cacti in the desert Southwest of North America.

Over half of the bat species on our planet are considered threatened or near threatened with extinction. Flying foxes, like the one pictured here, are one of the most persecuted of all wildlife groups. Culled as crop-pests, hunted for food, and losing the habitats that they live in and support, fruit bat populations are disappearing at an alarming rate. Their loss is our loss.

Our Approach

We work with a world-wide team of conservation scientists, educators and zoological institutions.

We link field studies with our premier center for bat conservation, research, and training.

We build capacity of communities to conserve fruit and nectar bats and their essential ecosystem services through education and outreach.

How You Can Help

For more information about Lubee or to receive information about our local Florida education outreach program, *Nocturnal Adventures*, please email us at info@Lubee.org. To make a donation, log on to our website at www.Lubee.org and click on "Join Us" or mail in your membership form below to:

Lubee Bat Conservancy
1309 NW 192nd Ave.
Gainesville, FL 32609

------(tear here)-----

Yes, I would like to become a member of Lubee Bat Conservancy. Enclosed please find my gift of

- \$25
- \$35
- \$50
- \$100
- (other) _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email (to receive newsletter) _____