

# Bat Awareness Patch Program

Protecting and preserving our environment is something we should strive to do. Whether you help the environment by picking up one plastic bag or by spending a day taking waste out of our ocean waters, every bit counts. Many animals are negatively harmed.

Across the globe, there are 1,421 known species of bats and 13 of those live here in Florida. Namely, South Florida is home to the Florida Bonneted Bat that has an estimated population of 3,000-5,000, making it the rarest bat in the United States. But the Florida Bonneted Bat isn't the only one; many bats are experiencing the same decrease in population.

The purpose of this program is to inform girls of the importance of bats, gain appreciation for bats, and bring forth awareness of the harms for bats and what can be done to help.

This program is designed for Girl Scout Brownies through Ambassadors and is able to serve as part of a total program on environmental issues and the endangerment of other animals. Protecting our world is our responsibility and reaching out to bats is just the beginning.



**To Earn the Patch:** Girls must complete six requirements to earn the patch. This patch can only be earned once.



Council Patch  
Order Form

## Discover:

- ▶ Bats are a 'keystone species'. What does keystone species mean, and what is the importance of keystone species? Name 3 other keystone species besides bats.
- ▶ Research facts about bats, such as basic bat information and fun facts, different species of bats, etc. Create a poster or display to share your findings with others.
- ▶ Research common myths surrounding bats. Create a fact sheet (or add on to the poster you created in the previous step) explaining why the myths aren't correct.
- ▶ Research the difference between 'hibernation' and 'torpor.' Which do bats in Florida experience? Are there states where bats experience the opposite? Name some of these states.
- ▶ Go to one of the Girl Scout camps (Camp Honi Hanta or Camp Caloosa) and locate the bat houses there. Research bat houses and how they help bat populations.
- ▶ Learn about bats by reading books about them.
- ▶ Research any extra information you are curious about! Keep learning more and more!

## Connect:

- ▶ Go to your local bat conservancy (or wildlife center that has bats). Speak with the people there about bats and ask questions. Take notes to share with friend later as you please.
- ▶ Become a citizen scientist and set up a day to go one of the Girl Scout camps and observe bats coming out of their houses—or coming back. Record the number of bats you see coming out, namely by using the 'echometers' (bat detectors) you can rent out from council.
- ▶ Celebrate a 'Bat Holiday': International Bat Appreciation Day on April 17th; Bat Awareness Month during October; or Bat Week October 24th through 31st. Share how you celebrated!

girl scouts   
of gulfcoast florida

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## Take Action:

- ▶ What laws are in place to protect bats? What are the consequences of breaking the law(s)? How are the laws enforced? Talk to a local government agency to learn more about how you can help.
- ▶ Talk to a group of people to help them understand the importance of bats. This could be a younger troop, school, church group, etc.
- ▶ Pesticides sprayed by airplanes have been known to cause harm to bat population. Research and develop a plan to reduce the impact of such sprays?



## Fun Facts About Bats!

- ▶ Bats are the only mammals that can fly.
- ▶ Bats are nocturnal creatures, meaning they are awake during the night and asleep during the day.
- ▶ Bats use echolocation (or sonar) to precisely and successfully locate their prey.
- ▶ 70% of bats are insectivores, primarily eating insects. Other bats are carnivorous, eating small mammals and fish. There are 3 species of vampire bats that do drink blood (complete the 'discover' step regarding myths to find out more about vampire bats).
- ▶ Bats live everywhere except polar regions.
- ▶ The smallest bat is the 'Bumblebee Bat' with a wingspan of 5-6 inches while the largest bat is the 'Flying Fox' with a wingspan of 5-6 feet.

