



## INTRODUCTION TO BAT CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT

by Paula Rodriguez de la Vega, April 2019

### What it is?

For the next two years, we are inviting families, clubs and schools to learn about and get involved with bat citizen science. Bats are fascinating nocturnal animals that are important to our environment and economy. Unfortunately, they are feared by many and shrouded by myths and misinformation.

More than half of BC bat species are in trouble, with some already listed as endangered or threatened.

Bats need our help. Citizen science is a great way to get children and youth involved in helping the natural world. We have prepared four different Explorer Days that can be organized with a bat theme. Leaders can choose to do one or all of them. Each theme engages kids in a different way.

The Bat Explorer Days are:

#### 1) BE A BAT BUDDY – MEET THE BATS

For this explorer day, we have designed bat themed games and activities that can be done for about 2 hours. The games and activities can be led by NatureKids BC club leaders, teachers, or bat nature mentors. All the games and activities are optional and are meant to give ideas that are age-appropriate.

#### 2) BE A BAT DETECTIVE – DO A BAT COUNT

For clubs that are interested in seeing bats, we encourage them to participate in a bat count. These are done at a roost where there is a bat colony. Bat counts start at sunset (around 9pm or 9:30pm) and go for about an hour. It is quite late for little explorers, so this will be a very special summer night. Bat counts are usually done between June 1-21 or July 11 to August 5<sup>th</sup> throughout the province. The data can be submitted to the bat citizen science coordinator who will summarize and submit to the BC Community Bat Program ([www.bcbats.ca](http://www.bcbats.ca)).



You can contact [citizenscience@naturekidsbc.ca](mailto:citizenscience@naturekidsbc.ca) to get ideas on location where bat counts are happening or contact your local Community Bat Program or environmental group.

### 3) BE A BAT BESTIE – TAKE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

In 2020, NatureKids BC can get involved in bat habitat stewardship. This might be an Explorer Day where the club helps with restoration or enhancement work such as: wetland clean up, riparian area clean up, re-vegetation of formerly treed habitat with native species, protecting large wildlife trees, helping with painting or installing a bat box in a location where bats are being excluded from a building, learning about managing hazards for bats, planting a bat-friendly garden.

### 4) BE A BAT CHAMPION – HELP RAISE AWARENESS

Encourage kids to teach others about the importance of bats. This can be an empowering experience for kids that enables them to make a difference. Make posters or build a bat education display out of cardboard and set up a bat table at local markets, malls, or children's fair. If your town has an annual parade, you could enter NatureKids BC and raise awareness about bats. Alternatively, you could see if anyone in your community is advocating to become a Bat Friendly Community (<https://www.bcbats.ca/index.php/get-involved/bat-friendly-communities>) and get your club involved.

### When?

The following dates are great for bat activities or events:

- February 2 – World Wetlands Day
- April 17 – Bat Appreciation Day
- April 22 – Earth Day
- June 1-22 – BC Annual Bat Count: pre-pup count
- July 11 – August 5 – BC Annual Bat Count: volant pups count
- August 27 – International Bat Night
- October 24-31 – Bat Week
- September 28 – World Rabies Day
- October 24 – Take Me Outside Day

The citizen science project is made possible thanks to;



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