



Echoes From SOUTH DAKOTA

SOUTH DAKOTA BAT WORKING GROUP

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2011

2011 BAT FESTIVAL

The 6th ANNUAL BAT FESTIVAL was again held at the Tatanka Theatre in Custer State Park this past August 13th. Beautiful weather and a full moon coupled with the surroundings helped make this one of the best Bat Festivals yet. Around 200 hundred people turned out this year and those remaining after sunset were rewarded by the emergence of a comparable number of bats from the bat house adjacent to the Tatanka Theatre.

In addition, bats again flew around inside the Theatre during the presentations to the delight of those attending. (OK, *most* were delighted.)

See inside for more Festival photos.

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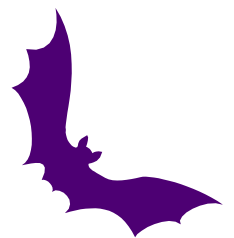


Photo by Nick Altadonna

**Going Out for Dinner -
one of the CSP resident bats takes off
looking for insects to eat.**

**2012 BAT FESTIVAL-
AUGUST 18TH!**



2011 BAT FESTIVAL PHOTOS



Information was provided on constructing and siting bat roosting boxes.

Festival Photos by Nick Altadonna

Other exhibit topics included information about bat contributions to agriculture, White Nose Syndrome, and threats posed by wind turbine development.





Custer State Park's beautiful Tatanka Theatre- a perfect setting for the Bat Festival (scheduled again for next year on 8/18/12)



Waiting on the stars of the festival to emerge.



Two talks on bats were presented during the course of the evening's festivities.



**Making sure the cookies meet the high standards of the SDBWG,
(L to R) Patti Lynch, Brad Phillips, and Nick Altadonna**



Photos by Nick Altadonna



Cary Roller helped younger Festival-goers with their assembly of a bat decoration to take home. Around 40 bats were assembled during the course of the Festival.



Laurie Tigner (left) and Julie Schipke provided assistance at the refreshment table.



NOTE:



**SCHEDULE CHANGE
FOR 2012**

In the past, the Bat Festival has been scheduled on the Saturday immediately following the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Next year, the Festival will be moved to the following Saturday (August 18th). This change was made after receiving numerous comments that increased traffic associated with the Rally was making some folks reluctant to travel to the Park on that final Rally weekend.

**So for 2012, the
7th Annual Bat Festival
will be on
Saturday, August 18th.**



Paul Schipke, Mining Engineer, provided information about abandoned mines & bat habitat.



**The SOUTH DAKOTA
BAT WORKING GROUP
would like to thank
Custer State Park
for once again providing
the Tatanka Theatre
and Park Staff,
Raesha Ray & Julie Brazell
in particular,
for their logistical support of
the Bat Festival.**



**Thanks to all of the
following folks who
volunteered their time and
energy to making another
successful Bat Festival:**

Nick Altadonna

Patti Lynch

Brad Phillips

Marty Phillips

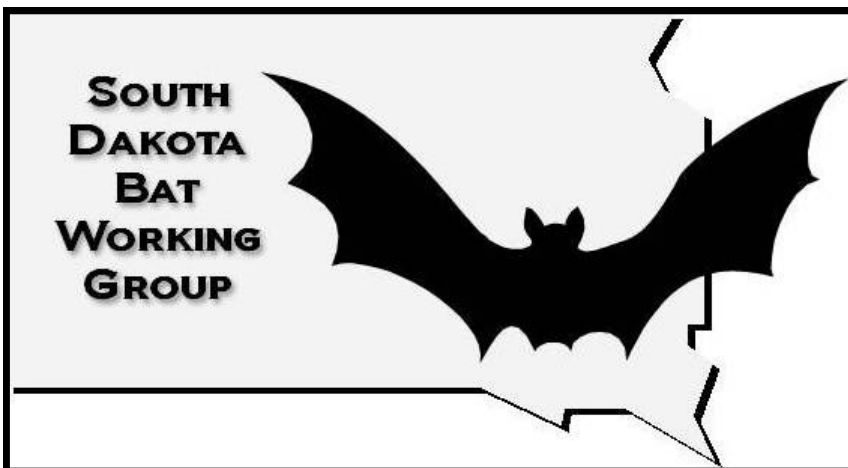
Cary Roller

Paul Schipke

Julie Schipke

Laurie Tigner

Joel Tigner



BAT NEWS

from South Dakota...

NEW DIGS AT CUSTER STATE PARK

When the bats return to the bat house at the Tatanka Theatre (see cover photo) at Custer State Park next spring, they'll find a change. The old house was starting to show signs of wear and the poles supporting it were thinking of tossing in the towel. Step in Zach Larson, a Scout working on his Eagle Project. Zach constructed a new house and with a little help from family and friends, a new house awaits the bats' return in 2012. The new house was put up immediately adjacent to the old box. At this writing, the old box is still up as a few stragglers are still in residence. The plan is to remove the old box once cold weather arrives and all of the bats have moved to their winter hibernation site. Zach has plans for other bat boxes at the new Outdoor Campus West in Rapid City.

Way to go, Zach!



The new bat box (left) near the Tatanka Theatre At Custer State Park. The older box will be taken down once we're certain all of the bats have moved out for the year.

Bat Box photo by Brad Phillips.
Scale adeptly provided by Marty Phillips.



Scout Zach Larson





...More SD **BAT NEWS**

MINE CLOSURES & REPAIRS TO IMPORTANT FORAGING LOCATION

Bat exclusion and closure of two abandoned mines too unstable to protect as bat habitat was recently carried out on the Northern Hills RD of the BHNH. Following evaluation for bat use and stability by biologists and a mining engineer, the sites were deemed too dangerous for bats and people. A properly timed exclusion was done to prevent entrapment of any luckless bats and both sites were permanently closed. These closures also serve to protect the public from serious hazards.

A spring-fed pond used by any variety of wildlife species was also recently repaired. The pond has been a documented favorite watering hole for 12 bat species. Damaged by grazing cattle, the site has been re-fenced and the pond's dam repaired. No need to worry about thirsty cows though, a stock tank is located outside the exclusion area. ***And speaking of stock tanks....see the story and photo on the last page.***



ANY QUILTERS OUT THERE?

A new quilt pattern entitled "Emergence" from Laurie Tigner Designs is now available. The design is comprised entirely of different stylized bats and is 24 inches in diameter.

Available online at www.LaurieTignerDesigns.com, one dollar from each pattern of this design sold is being donated to the SDBWG's *BAT BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS* project.

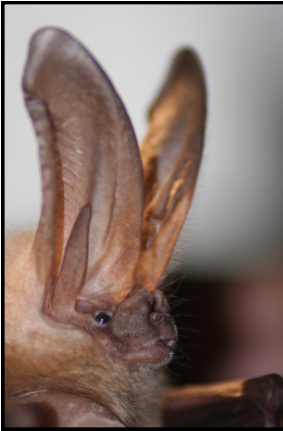
BAT GATE UPDATE...

Three new bat gates, all on the Black Hills National Forest, have been constructed to protect bat roosting habitat and, in the case of the mines, mitigate public safety hazards. This brings the total number of bat gates constructed in the Black Hills region to forty-eight.

Two of the new sites are abandoned mines (see next page) and one is a natural cave. The mines are on the Hell Canyon Ranger District and the cave is on the Northern Hills RD.

District biologists, Valerie Carlson and Jeff Goldberg (Northern Hills RD), coordinated a clean-up of the cave with volunteers from the local caving group, the Paha Sapa Grotto. Several days were spent removing trash and graffiti in an attempt to return the much-abused cave to a more natural state. It is hoped that with the installation of the bat gate and controlling access, bats will once again return, particularly using the site once again for hibernation.





Bat shown is not to scale :)



NEW BAT GATES



All construction photos courtesy of Brad Phillips

One newly-protected bat roosting site is an abandoned mine on the Black Hills NF. The mine was evaluated by biologists and found to serve as a year-round roost for Townsend's big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) [see inset].

The mine is a vertical shaft with horizontal drifts at the bottom about 100 feet down. Presenting an obvious fall hazard, the gate design maximizes the flyway available to bats and prevents accidental falls by the public.

Constructed on site, each gate is custom-fitted to the existing opening. Changes in the size of the opening can result in changes to the interior microclimate. This can alter conditions within the mine to the point where it will no longer be used by the bats.

District Biologist for the Hell Canyon Ranger District, Brad Phillips, worked with timber sale foresters to leave a buffer of trees uncut around the site. Removal of trees can increase the exposure of the opening to increased wind or solar exposure, both of which can alter interior conditions within the mine.

Every effort is made to maintain existing conditions when bats are found to be using a site.

Learning about Migratory Bats in South Dakota

by
Silka Kempema

In December of 2010, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks and Batworks, LLC initiated a study to learn more about migratory bats in South Dakota. This project is an effort to collect basic information about bats that do not spend the winter in South Dakota.

We are asking the following questions:

- When do bats migrate through South Dakota
- Are there bat migratory corridors and
- What is the relationship between their movements and the weather?

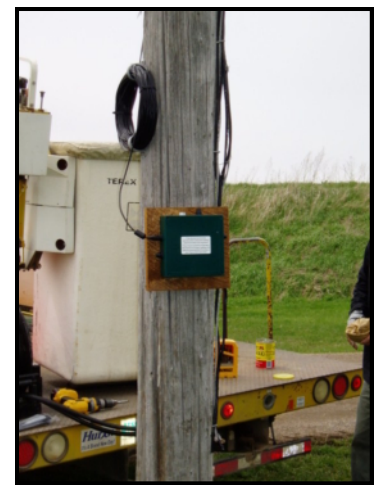
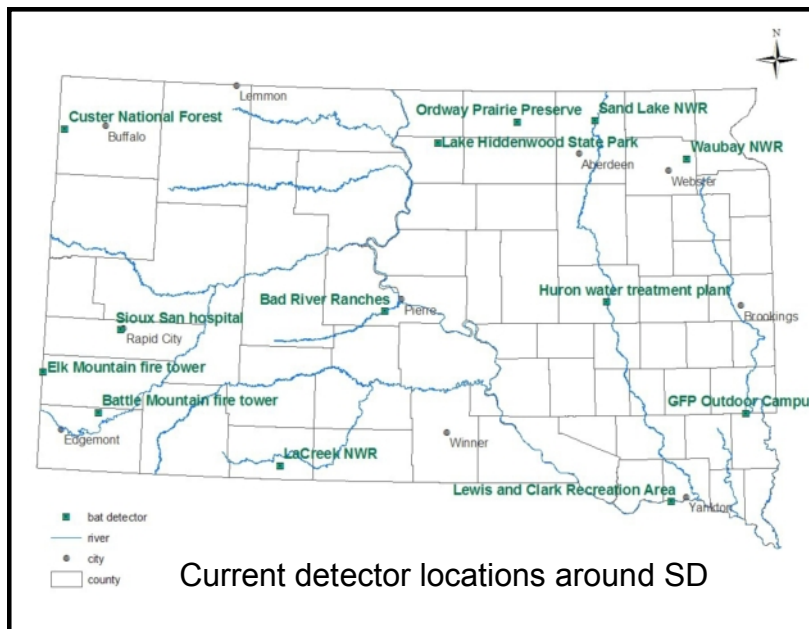
Answers to these questions will provide basic biological, behavioral and ecological information on migratory bat species and help wildlife agencies make more informed management recommendations.

This project has taken full advantage of recent advances in technology. Thirteen SM2 acoustic bat detectors (see picture) designed by *Wildlife Acoustics* were programmed and deployed across the state (see map). We generally picked locations that provided trees and water (rivers and lakes) and that had a willing cooperator to assist us with data collection and detector

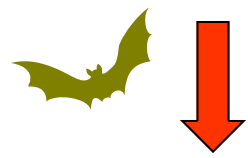
maintenance. Detectors were co-located on existing structures, (such as towers and poles) and placed in areas that would make data retrieval and detector maintenance relatively convenient for cooperators.

Several agencies and organizations have provided valuable assistance including South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks Wildlife Division and Parks and Recreation Division, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Sand Lake, LaCreek, and Waubay National Wildlife Refuges) and Huron Wetland Management District), City of Huron, Friends of Mahgatahapi, The Nature Conservancy, Turner Enterprises, Inc., U.S. Forest Service (Black Hills and Custer National Forests), Sioux San Hospital in Rapid City, and South Dakota Department of Agriculture's Wildland Fire Suppression Division.

This two-year project is funded by a State Wildlife Grant and by Department of Game, Fish and Parks license dollars.



A *Wildlife Acoustic* detector mounted on a pole at the Huron survey site. The cable runs up to an ultrasonic microphone at the top of the pole.



POETS' CORNER



Attention young and old! We are looking for your poems about bats- poems that teach, poems that celebrate, and poems that make us laugh. If you have submissions for future editions of *Echoes of South Dakota*, please send them to me at Cary.Roller@k12.sd.us. You may also send them through the mail to me, C/O Knollwood Elementary, 1701 Downing Street, Rapid City, SD 57701. Just tell us how you would like to be published (first name, grade, and school or first name and city, for example). Please make sure that the poems are original pieces of work and not copyrighted by someone else. **-Cary Roller**

Bats

Bats are black.

Bats are gray.

Bats live in a cave.

Bats like to fly.

Bats hang upside down.

Bats like to stay up all night long.

Bats like to sleep during the day!

By Chase
4th Grader, Rapid City

Bats

Live in caves

Live in houses

Black and brown

Big as a plate

Small as a finger

Eat fruit from the trees

Hard to find

Fly at night

By Donovan, 2nd Grade, Rapid City



A bat is something else than a bird.

A bat hangs upside down and a bird sleeps in a nest.

By River, 2nd Grade, Rapid City



Bats, bats, bats

Hanging upside down

Upside down hanging

Hanging from some branches

Bats sleep at day

They're awake at night

Bats are nocturnal

By Connor,
2nd Grade, Rapid City

ANOTHER NEW SCHOOL YEAR IS UNDERWAY...

&

SDBWG's

BAT BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS



Is still looking for sponsors of sets of books about bats for Elementary Schools across South Dakota.

Can't swing the cost of a complete set of books? Any amount can be donated (tax deductible) and ALL of your money is spent on the purchase of books (NEVER for admin or shipping costs). Check with your school's PTA or local businesses for help with sponsorships.

**Help SD's school children
learn early about the
importance of bats!**

Visit us on the web!
www.sdbwg.org



STOCK TANKS & BAT CONSERVATION

DID YOU KNOW... In dry country, stock tanks are used by lots of different types of wildlife, bats included. Many small animals are unable to escape should they fall in. Bats drink on the wing and commonly will spiral down, lap up a mouthful, and spiral out...very little room for error. If the tank is full to the top, the luckless bat, red-faced, can usually manage to get out. If, however, the water level is below the lip, the bat is trapped inside and will swim around the inside tank wall until exhausted and ultimately drown. This is also the case with other small mammals. A new design in stock tanks is now available with bi-directional escape ramps molded into the sides of the stock tank.. They are comparably priced to older models. If you know

someone putting in a new stock tank, suggest they consider this new design. It's a simple way to help provide or enhance wildlife habitat. For more information on a supplier, visit our web site—www.sdbwg.org.



SOUTH DAKOTA BAT WORKING GROUP

Primary Contacts:

BRAD PHILLIPS
SDBWG Chair
bphillips@goldenwest.net

DR. SCOTT PEDERSEN
SDBWG Vice-Chair &
Webmaster
Scott.Pedersen@sdsstate.edu

JOEL TIGNER
Newsletter Editor &
Bat Books For Schools
joeltigner@gmail.com
605-390-2061

Postal address:
SDBWG NEWSLETTER
C/O
Joel Tigner
2416 Cameron Drive
Rapid City, SD 57702

The purpose of the SD Bat Working Group is to work to protect bats and bat habitat through action, education, and cooperation with Federal, State, Tribal, and private landowners.

Our objectives are two-fold: to raise awareness about the role bats play in maintaining healthy ecosystems; and to work with public land managers and private landowners and provide alternatives that will reduce possible adverse affects to bats or bat habitat.

Everyone is welcome to become a member of the SD Bat Working Group!

The only requirement is an interest in bats and their conservation.

There are no membership dues, so it's priced right for everyone!

Get involved.....because bats need friends.