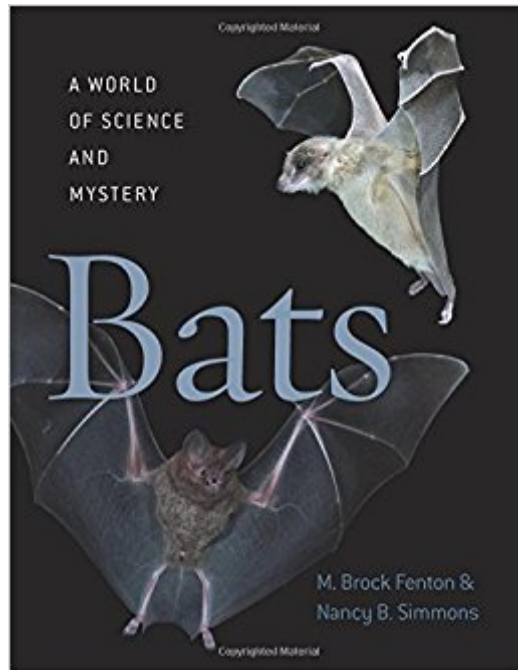




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Bats: A World Of Science And Mystery



Synopsis

There are more than 1,300 species of bats—or almost a quarter of the world’s mammal species. But before you shrink in fear from these furry creatures of the night, consider the bat’s fundamental role in our ecosystem. A single brown bat can eat several thousand insects in a night. Bats also pollinate and disperse the seeds for many of the plants we love, from bananas to mangoes and figs.

Bats: A World of Science and Mystery presents these fascinating nocturnal creatures in a new light. Lush, full-color photographs portray bats in flight, feeding, and mating in views that show them in exceptional detail. The photos also take the reader into the roosts of bats, from caves and mines to the tents some bats build out of leaves. A comprehensive guide to what scientists know about the world of bats, the book begins with a look at bats’ origins and evolution. The book goes on to address a host of questions related to flight, diet, habitat, reproduction, and social structure: Why do some bats live alone and others in large colonies? When do bats reproduce and care for their young? How has the ability to fly—unique among mammals—influenced bats’ mating behavior? A chapter on biosonar, or echolocation, takes readers through the system of high-pitched calls bats emit to navigate and catch prey. More than half of the world’s bat species are either in decline or already considered endangered, and the book concludes with suggestions for what we can do to protect these species for future generations to benefit from and enjoy. From the tiny “bumblebee bat”—the world’s smallest mammal—to the Giant Golden-Crowned Flying Fox, whose wingspan exceeds five feet, **A Battery of Bats** presents a panoramic view of one of the world’s most fascinating yet least-understood species.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Yes, bats can be scary, but they can be beautiful, too, as researchers M. Brock Fenton and Nancy B. Simmons show in their new book, *Bats: A World of Science and Mystery*. (Wall Street Journal 2015-02-06)

“Recommended. . . . Fenton and Simmons provide a wealth of information about the biology and natural history of bats. (Choice 2015-05-26)

"Twelve chapters explain the biology of bats, their evolutionary history, morphologies, behaviors, life histories, food, diseases, and conservation. Wonderful color photographs accompany the text. (Ecology 2015-07-09)

“Bats has something for everyone, from casual seekers of fascinating eye candy to professional scientists interested in the latest discoveries. . . . By the end of the book, the reader feels like he has been taken on a personal tour by people who really care about what they do. . . . Fenton and Simmons provide a highly accessible glimpse into what it is like to study bats and the kinds of unexpected things that can happen along the way. (Biological Conservation 2015-11-04)

Fenton and Simmons share a wealth of information on bats gathered from the primary literature and their collective wisdom in a format that everyone can enjoy. . . . This is a highly informative, easy-to-read book. . . . It is incredibly well written and the layout is well balanced with an ideal amount of text accompanied by beautiful photographs and easy-to-interpret diagrams and illustrations. Despite tackling some highly technical and, at times, complicated concepts, the authors manage to organize and explain each section in a straightforward and effortless manner, enabling anyone to learn about these fascinating animals regardless of whether they are finding out about them for the first time or have been studying them for years. (Quarterly Review of Biology 2016-04-25)

Melville Brock Fenton is professor in and chair of the Department of Biology at the University of Western Ontario. He is the author or editor of several books, including *Bat Ecology*, also published by the University of Chicago Press. Nancy B. Simmons is curator-in-charge of the Department of Mammalogy at the American Museum of Natural History, where she is also professor in the Richard Gilder Graduate School.

Noticing it on a coffee table, you'll be drawn in by this book's high-quality, weighty and attractive

printing, opening to nearly 300 pages of crisp, diverse bat photographs against glossy black. But once you're inside what will captivate you is the text - the true beauty of bats is in the science. Once you learn that bats use sensitive hairs on the surface of their wings to detect and react to air vortices, those mysterious photographs of a wingbeat cycle take on meaning. Several pages of bat photographs in the first chapter, at first seemingly presented as a simple diversity showcase, will be referenced later throughout the text as the authors point out details of the evolved facial features and what they tell us about the lives of these bats. Some photos that have previously gained notice online, such as a series of embryonic bat development, are printed in this book in higher detail than you can find anywhere else, and with greater explanation and context. Other reviewers have mentioned the depth this book provides. I consider myself a serious bat enthusiast - yet almost any bat fact I might rattle off is in this book already. The science is cutting edge: for example, it charts the spread of White Nose Syndrome up to the most recent hibernation season, and it presents the recent overturning of the classical megabat/microbat distinction by the newer genetically based yin/yang classification system. Although presentations of bat science must always be sensitive to public misconceptions and biases, in this book good science comes before above all else. The notion that bats should be thought of as desirable because they control mosquito populations is dismissed as questionable science at best, and the sections on bats and diseases include frank discussions about rabies, histoplasmosis, Ebola and SARS. This book could not have come from a better pair of authors - Fenton has made venerable contributions and is a wellspring of stories throughout his career, and has extensive experience writing for the nontechnical audience through several previous books. Simmons is a powerhouse on the vanguard of current bat science; her research group at the American Museum of Natural History brings extraordinary resources to the study of evolutionary bat biology. The book is interspersed with personal anecdotes from both of these researchers, including how to set up sneaky bat traps, and what happens when they get bitten. The personal stories can be quite colorful, e.g. Fenton on examining a termite hill turned bat roost: "It is an amazing experience to stick your hand inside one of these bat roosts and feel all the little warm, squirming bodies of the bats roosting within!" The only complaint I have about the book is the prevalence of typos and erroneous editing. Many words are misspelled, in-text references to the labeled figures can end up pointing you to the wrong place, and an inset on page 278 simply cuts off in the middle of the text. However, for a first edition it's forgivable, the book is well worth the purchase even with these errors, especially since they never compromise the science.

I would give the authors 4 stars for their content and the editor 1 star for deciding to print the book

on black pages. For me, white font on black pages got old very quickly and the image captions in dark red bordered on unreadable. The image quality varied from very good to something that looked like an out of focus snapshot take on a cell phone. Placing images that have a black background on a black page scream out for some sort of frame. While I might not expect a scientist to be a master of layout, I would expect a competent editor to be better.

This is an absolutely incredible and amazing book. Fenton and Simmons are well-respected bat scientists who write to be understood. This book not only has a terrific overview of everything about bats, it is right up-to-date with the most modern information. Researchers are constantly learning new things about bats, including discovering new species, so having an up-to-date book like this is great. The photographs of the bats show off so much about them and also create a beautiful book. The authors even include anecdotes about their experiences in the field with bats, which makes the book even more readable, accessible and interesting.

Awesome book!! For bat lovers of all types, this is going to be one of my favorite reference books. Very Impressed.

Great

Just what I wanted

Fantastic subject and a beautiful book

Excellent book

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