

Bats are misunderstood creatures

In the 70's, Dark Shadows, was a Soap Opera that aired in the afternoon after school, it was about Barnabus Collins, a vampire. I could never miss it because it would be all the talk at school the next day. My childhood fear of bats came from this show. Barnabus Collins would change into a bat form, come into an innocent's bedroom at night, and suck their blood. Therefore, as a child scared to death of bats, it could be 90 degrees at night and I would have cover around my neck at night trying to go to sleep. It is unfortunate that much of what people "know" about bats has been learned from Hollywood. Hollywood has not been very accurate or flattering in its portrayal of these small beneficial mammals.

Bats may be the most misunderstood animals in the United States, although as consumers of enormous numbers of in-

sects, they rank among the most beneficial. Almost all United States bats, and 70 percent of the bat species worldwide, feed almost exclusively on insects and are thus extremely beneficial. In fact, bats are the only major predators of night-flying insects. One bat can eat between 600 and 1,000 mosquitoes and other insect pests in just one hour. A big brown bat (we have here) can eat 3,000 to 7,000 insects every night - try that with your electric bug zapper! Cities in the Midwest are now building and installing bat houses to reduce their bug spraying costs and you can follow suit by building a few for your own backyard with inexpensive untreated

lumber for just a few dollars. We built our bats house out of old wooden pallets.

Remember This: In 2012, Louisiana had 335 confirmed cases of West Nile virus in humans, and health officials expected the disease to be a serious

threat again in 2013. Nationally, more than 5,387 people were infected in 2012, with the most serious cases affecting the elderly and people with other health problems.

While most United States bat species are insectivorous, bats in other parts of the world feed on a variety of items in addition to insects. Many species feed primarily on fruit, while several types feed on nectar and pollen. Fruit bats perform an extremely important function as seed dispersers. Nectar eating bats, including the federally-listed endangered lesser long-nosed and greater

Mexican long-nosed bats, are important pollinators. Many plant species depend almost entirely on bats for pollination

Most bats use echolocation to navigate in the dark and find food. Bats send out sound waves using their mouth or nose. When the sound hits an object, an echo comes back. The bat can identify an object by the sound of the echo. They can even tell the size, shape and texture of a tiny insect from its echo.

I have always heard stay away from bats because they have rabies, but the facts are that less than 1/2 of 1% of bats carry the rabies virus. In addition, rabid bats are seldom aggressive. Fewer than 40 people in the United States are known to have contracted rabies from bats during the past 40 years. Far more people are killed by dog attacks, bee stings, power mowers, or lightning than rabies from bats.

However, rabies is a dangerous disease so you should avoid direct contact with bats as well as other wild animals.

By far the most famous bats are the vampire bats.

These amazing creatures are found in Mexico, Central America and South America. Vampires feed on the blood of warm-blooded animals such as birds, horses and cattle. Vampire bats do not suck blood. The bats obtain blood by making a small cut in the skin of a sleeping animal with their razor-sharp teeth and then lapping up the blood as it flows from the wound. There is an anticoagulant in the bat's saliva that helps to prevent the animal's blood from clotting until the bat has finished its meal. The bat's saliva also contains an anesthetic that reduces the likelihood of the animal feeling the prick. Each bat requires only about two tablespoons of blood every day, so the loss of blood to a prey animal is small and rarely causes any harm.

I know they look like rats, but they are not rodents. In fact, there is recent evidence that bats may be more closely related to primates (which include humans) than to rodents.

Many bats find trees to be the perfect place to roost and spend time tak-

ing care of their babies. Some bats actually live under big leaves and by using camouflage, they can hide from harm and danger. There are other bats that roost under the bark of trees, while still others just hang from the branches. Trees, caves buildings, bridges & mines

Studies have shown that bat houses work best when located within about 1,000 feet of water (where many bugs hang out). The houses should be oriented toward the east or southeast so, they warm up quickly in the morning.

Nail your finished bat house to an unobstructed spot 12 to 15 feet above the ground. An out building or tree trunk is ideal—but don't mount it too near living quarters, since smelly bat guano (which is high in nitrogen and great for your garden once composted) may accumulate under the bat house and attract roaches and mites. (If the bat house is not occupied by the second season, change the location.) Our design is bottomless to discourage rodents and other animals from nesting in it.



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LSU improves season record with win streak

LSU won all five of its games last week to improve to 15-1 this season and extend its win streak to 10 game.

The 15-1 mark is the Tigers' best 16-game record since the 2011 team also won 15 of its first 16 games. With the three-game sweep of Washington last weekend, the Tigers improved their all-time record against Pac-12 schools to 24-6-1.

Senior first baseman Mason Katz led LSU to five wins last week, by launching three homers and recording 10 RBI.

Katz hit .353 (6-for-17) on the week with one double, three dingers, six runs scored and 10 RBI. He also walked four times and recorded a .476 on-base percentage. Katz unloaded two homers and collected five RBI in Saturday's win over Washington, marking the first two-homer game of his LSU career.

His three-run blast in the first inning Saturday against UW ace Austin Voth gave the Tigers a 3-0 lead they would never relinquish in an 8-4 win. Katz's two-run blast in the second inning on Sunday erased a 2-0 Washington lead and propelled the Tigers to a 7-5 victory. Katz is hitting .328 on the year, and he leads the Tigers with five homers and 24 RBI. Katz is batting .400 (14-for-35) over the past 10 games with three doubles, one triple, four homers and 19 RBI.

Freshman shortstop Alex Bregman batted .474 (9-for-19) in the Tigers' five wins last week with three doubles, one triple, two RBI and seven runs scored. He also recorded two stolen bases and walked five times, posting a .583 on-base percentage.

Bregman is LSU's second-leading hitter on the year, batting .391 (25-for-64) with five doubles, two

Last Week's Results

March 5 (Tue.) - STEPHEN F. AUSTIN (W, 9-2)
March 6 (Wed.) - SACRED HEART (W, 10-2)
March 8 (Fri.) - WASHINGTON (W, 9-4)
March 9 (Sat.) - WASHINGTON (W, 8-4)
March 10 (Fri.) - WASHINGTON (W, 7-5)

This Week's Schedule

March 15 (Fri.) - at Mississippi State,
6:30 p.m. CT
March 16 (Sat.) - at Mississippi State,
6 p.m. CT (TV - CSS/CST)
March 17 (Sun.) - at Mississippi State,
1:30 p.m. CT

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13					14			15				
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65					66	67		68				
69					70			71				
72					73			74				

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THEME: March Madness

ACROSS

1. Old Toyota model
6. Priestly garb
9. "Yes, ___!"
13. Shrek and Fiona, e.g.
14. Neither
15. "Dancing with the Stars" number
16. Country alliances
17. ___-Wan Kenobi
18. Potter enemy
19. "Sweet number"
21. "Some fill out more than one"
23. Mork's planet
24. Kind of moss
25. Company that loves logistics
28. "The shot clock measures how much you have"
30. Loose Hawaiian unbelted dress
35. Stanislavski's rifle, e.g.
37. Persian backgammon
39. Open disrespect
40. Musician's time to shine
41. Assumption taken for granted
43. Lincoln ___
44. Kindle download
46. Senegal's neighbor
47. Toward the lee
48. Electric car maker, pl.
50. Living quarters
52. Short for abstract syntax tree
53. Cher goes by one of these
55. Refrigerator sound
57. For spicing things up
61. "Ultimate NCAA tournament destination"
65. Diver's lung
66. Yes move
68. One who tries
69. Ups the stakes
70. "A shot below the line is worth this"
71. Washer setting
72. R in RIP
73. He is
74. "The Second Coming" poet

DOWN

1. Boo-hoo
2. Tangerine and grapefruit hybrid
3. In the next month
4. Right-hand page
5. Declare with confidence
6. Shakespeare's "at another time"
7. Tennis shot
8. Grease one's palms
9. Painter ___ Chagall
10. Every which way
11. Competent
12. Grain in "The House That Jack Built"
15. Facebook ___
20. Augmenting
22. "VCU fans, ___ Nation"
24. Diffuse
25. *16 seed over 1 seed, e.g.
26. Investigate thoroughly
27. Arias, e.g.
29. Permanently disfigure
31. *Championship record-holder
32. Cabbage
33. Prods
34. Not fixed or appointed
36. *This one is not for swimming
38. Sub station
42. *Many teams start season with "Mid___ Madness"
45. *Last year's runner-up
49. Cul de ___
51. Oppressively hot and humid
54. *NCAA's Big Dance occurs in the third one
56. Donny's singing sister
57. Peter the Great, e.g.
58. High school breakout
59. Goes with ifs and ands
60. Drive a getaway car, e.g.
61. Fussess
62. Fashion house founder Ricci
63. Reason to cram
64. Aphrodite's lover
67. Be obliged to pay

THE MOON

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triples, one homer, 14 RBI, 16 runs and five steals. During LSU's current 10-game win streak, Bregman is hitting .400 (16-for-40) with three doubles, two triples, one homer and eight RBI.

Freshman outfielder Mark Laird is batting a sizzling .500 (16-for-32)

over the last 10 games with one double, five RBI, 13 runs scored and a .590 on-base percentage.

Junior third baseman Christian Ibarra is hitting .414 (12-for-29) over the last 10 games with three doubles, seven RBI and five runs scored.

Senior outfielder Raph Rhymes has posted a .400 (16-for-40) average over the past 10 games with six doubles, 12 RBI and 11 runs scored.

Junior second baseman JaCoby Jones has walked 16 times this season in 16 games, already surpassing his previous single-season high for walks (15) set in 2012.

Sophomore right-hander Aaron Nola threw six perfect innings in his win against Washington Friday before allowing a single to open the seventh inning.

Senior left-hander Chris Cotton is a perfect 5-for-5 so far this season in save opportunities. Cotton posted two saves last week, firing three scoreless innings over three appearances with no hits, no walks and four strikeouts.