

Houston Zoo at Home

NOCTURNAL ANIMALS

Echolocate Me!

All Ages

Bats navigate using reflected sound waves. This process, known as echolocation, allows these animals to “see” in the dark. To uncover objects, bats must first emit a series of sound pulses. These pulses travel outward and strike objects. The pulses are then reflected off the objects and return back to the bats. Detected by their large ears, the sounds are quickly analyzed by the brain’s echolocation center. This is how the bats in our Children’s Zoo caves can navigate their dark habitat without bumping into walls or another bat!

Materials Needed:

- Blindfold
- family members
- large open area

Steps:

1. Designate one family member as the bat. The rest of the family will form a large circle around the bat. Appoint other family members to be moths and step inside the circle. Remaining family members will enlarge the circle and be trees.
2. The bat calls for the insect by saying “Moth?” Moths reply “Here!” The bat must listen and tag as many moths as possible using only his or her sense of hearing.
3. If a moth is tagged, it becomes a tree. If the bat is too close to the edge, the trees whisper “Tree,” and gently steer the bat towards the middle of the circle.

Share your project with us!

Tag your photo using #HoustonZoo or email us your story at communications@houstonzoo.org.

Home Sweet Home

All Ages

Bats may be found in a variety of habitats, but one thing is certain, they are going to be packed as closely together as possible! When they return to their roost to sleep, bats will cram in right next to each other. It is not unusual for thousands of bats to be snuggled up together. In fact, the bat house kits you can find to build at supply stores can house up to 50 bats in a single bat house!

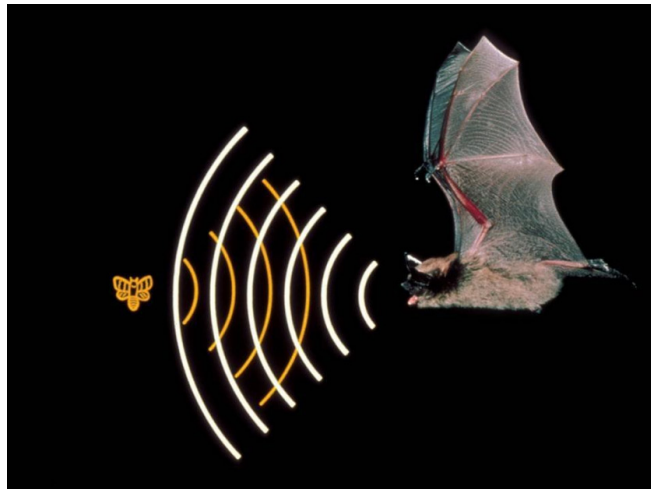


Photo Credit: HZI Partner, Bat Conservation International (BCI).
To learn more about the bats here in Texas and what you can do to help them in the wild, visit: <http://www.batcon.org/>

Materials Needed:

- Sheets
- Chairs
- Cushions
- Couch
- Any items to build a cave

Steps:

1. Have one family member create a cave out of the materials. Once it is complete, see how many family members or 'bats' can fit in the cave. Is it comfortable? A little cramped?
2. Switch who makes the cave and test out different designs of caves.

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