

To begin any conservation project, you must decide what is important to you, what your talents are, and what you would like to accomplish. If you create your own project and work on it with enthusiasm, people will want to know more about it and about you.

Read the ideas below and decide what you would like to do for your project.

1. Be clever and original!

Are you good with words? Would you like to be a poet, songwriter, author, or advertising copywriter? Have you ever tried thinking like a bat? Perhaps you should create something original to teach your friends about bats.

- You could write a poem, a children's story, or a song about bats (you can just put new words to a tune you already know unless you are a musician too!).
- You could create a comic book that has a story about bats, or you could dream up an advertising campaign with a catchy slogan, for example, "Bats need friends too." Then you could make posters using your slogan.
- You could even create a board game about bats. For example, you could have people move their game pieces up or back based on messages such as this one: "Careless cave explorers disturb your hibernation roost. Go back three spaces."

Can you think of anything else you could create to share what you know about bats?

All of these projects are easy to share with people because they are entertaining. You can sing your song to friends or to your class, read your book to a younger relative or a friend, or display your ads at school or at the office of a parent or adult friend.

2. Speak out!

Would you like to be a leader, speaking in front of friends or even strangers without fear? There is no better way to start than by sharing your new knowledge about bats. If you already know that bats are not bad or frightening, you know more about bats than most people on earth—even more than most adults. That means that you have something to teach. Use your knowledge to put together a bat education program.

It might make your bat talk even more interesting if you have pictures of bats to show your audience. There are several ways to get pictures:

- You can draw or paint them yourself, using books from the library as reference.
- You can cut pictures out of magazines that have bat articles. (Ask permission first before cutting pictures out of magazines or books that do not belong to you.)

3. Write about it!

Write to local conservation organizations, and ask what they are doing to help bats. Some organizations still don't know how important bats are. They may not yet include bats in their work to help save animals and their habitats. Write those organizations or government agencies responsible for animals in your area to let them know why bats are important.

- If a conservation issue arises in your area that could hurt or help bats, write to your elected community leaders, wildlife officials, businesses, or whichever individuals or groups are most likely to be able to help. Let them know how their actions could affect bats. Also, remember that you are most likely to get their help if you are kind and courteous to them.

4. Put on a show!

Ever thought about becoming an actor or actress? How about a director, playwright, or screenwriter?

- You could start your career right now by putting on a play about bats. Write a script for a play in which you and your classmates participate as bats, or some as bats and some as other animals or people.
- You can put on a puppet show or create a "game show," like those on TV, about bats.
- You could be the host of the game show and have guests try to answer questions about bats that you have written. Can you make your performance fun and interesting for an audience while still teaching them important things about bats?

5. Get some attention!

Are you a good writer? You might want to write an article for a local newspaper. When newspapers print frightening stories about how dangerous bats are, people become afraid and kill bats.

- You can help by writing a letter to the editor. Imagine seeing your name in the local newspaper! It is true that bats are wild animals and they can harm you. Any animal, even dogs and deer, can be dangerous if we do not learn to live safely with them. If we simply do not attempt to handle bats, we have little to fear and much to gain from sharing our neighborhoods with them. Of course, in your letter you will also want to explain why bats are valuable friends.

6. Create a work of art!

Do you like to draw? You can teach people about bats with a drawing, painting, or art done on a computer. You may want to borrow a bat book from the library and use the pictures for reference.

- You could also create a poster or a comic strip to show why bats are good guys.
- Your school is a perfect place to display your work, or you and your classmates might even cooperate on a project for display at a friendly local business. Some businesses enjoy showing off student art, especially when there is a conservation message.

7. Get involved!

Would you like to be part of a team and contribute to a good cause? There are many important conservation projects that need people like you. You can contact a local wildlife agency or nature center to find out what bats need in your area. Often the best thing you can do is help raise money for your choice project.

- For example, you could hold a bake sale, a car wash, or collect aluminum cans. Then you could use the money you make to help in many ways. You could buy bat books, videos, and other educational materials for a classroom that cannot afford them, or to improve the collection at your own school or city library.
- You could help save a bat cave, sponsor a research project, or “adopt” a species of bat that is in danger. Bat Conservation International and other organizations are already working on many projects like these, and you can be an important part of them with your support. Don’t think that you have to raise a lot of money to be helpful. If you can raise even \$15, you can “adopt” a bat, which means that you will get a letter, picture, and description of your bat (though you don’t get an actual live bat—sorry!), and your donation will help Bat Conservation International work even harder to protect bats.