

## Our Flying Friends: Demystifying Bats and Their Behavior

Chiropterans (i.e. bats) are an ecologically and taxonomically diverse order of mammals which account for approximately 20% of all mammal species. They provide many important ecosystem services, including reducing insect pests, pollinating plants, and dispersing seeds which provide millions of dollars in economic services to humans every year. However, bats are facing multiple threats - such as climate change, diseases, and habitat loss - which are causing population declines and preventing managers from effectively protecting and conserving species. Additional and more targeted outreach efforts by bat researchers can help to not only educate the general public about bats and the threats they face, but improve knowledge about animal behavior and the scientific process.

Broadly, my outreach program aims to provide both in-person and online resources which educate individuals of all ages about bats, their behavior, and the research methods scientists use to study them. Through summer workshops, older children and adults will be able to watch and interactively participate in monitoring and capture methods of multiple bat species while they leave their roosts, forage, and fly (**Fig. 1**). My program will also engage younger audiences via mini-coloring books I designed which will feature various bat behaviors and the benefits they impart on our ecosystems.



**Figure 1.** A past *ad hoc* outreach effort to raise awareness about bats.

In addition to the in-person workshops, I plan to record educational videos and write blog posts which outline various research methods I – and other animal behavior labs – use to study bat behavior. I will distribute these videos and posts via a blog I co-founded, [That's Life \[Science\]](#) (**Fig. 2**). The videos and blog posts will incorporate activities from the in-person workshops (with participant permission), interviews with attendees & local wildlife biologists, descriptions of different data collection & analysis methods for wildlife behavior research, and “day-in-the-life” stories about fieldwork.



**Figure 2.** Screenshot of the *That's Life [Science]* blog homepage.