

Bats - Pests or Pals?

By Kathy Kelchner, Frances Slocum State Park, Nescopeck, PA

Standard Statement(s):

4.5.4 A,B,C-Identify the pest, explain pest control, understand society's need for IPM.

Content Objective(s):

- 1)students will be able to differentiate between a bat as a "pest" or a "pal."
- 2)students will name 3 bats common to Pennsylvania
- 3)students will demonstrate understanding of a bat's basic biology and food finding technique.

Assessment Strategies:

Written report on the bat of their choice
Classroom discussion

Procedures:

After introducing bats and their basic biology in a previous lesson, put up 2 word-signs on opposite sides of the classroom. Instruct students to think about what they've heard about bats, and stand under the appropriate word-pest or pal. When all students have made choices, ask for reasons, why pest or why pal? List answers on board. Ask if bats can be both and when/why?

Instruct students to return to seats and continue discussion. Certainly we don't want bats flying around in our houses. Usually these are young bats who have accidentally wandered in. Demonstrate with cardboard and bowl how to safely remove a bat from your home. To prevent bats in attics, grown ups should seal all openings after bats have left in late fall.

But what do Pennsylvania bats do for us ? They all eat insects, especially mosquitoes. Show poster and introduce bats of PA. All are insectivores. Bats in other parts of the world eat many things, but in Pennsylvania its only insects. Bats are nocturnal, flying around in the dark, so how do they find their food?(echo-location) They emit a high pitched squeak which goes out, bounces off a bug and back to the bat's ear. The bat continues to squeak and move closer until catching the insect.

Play Bat and Moth: (like Marco Polo but without the pool!)

Have students form a large circle. Choose 2 students to come into the center. One student will be blindfolded as the bat, and the other will be the moth. Emphasize that the bat is blindfolded to simulate the night, NOT because bats are blind. The child playing the bat must say, "bat,bat,bat." The child who is the moth must immediately respond, "moth,moth,moth." They continue this while the bats tries to pinpoint the moth by sound and tag him/her.

Suggested Level:
4th grade

Standard Category:
4.5 IPM

Materials:
bat posters
bowl, cardboard sheet
blindfold
pest/pal signs
bat model

Instructional Strategies:
discussion
game

References:

PA bat poster from Wild Resource Conservation Fund
Golden Guide to Bats
Bat curriculum from Bat Conservation International
Season of the Bat video-Wild resource Conservation Fund
Neighborhood Bats by Merlin Tuttle
A First Look at Bats by M.E. Selsan

Related Web Sites:

www.batcon.org