

2014 North American Bat Research Symposium Teacher Workshop

Patricia Morton, NASBR Teacher Workshop Coordinator

Albany, New York was the site of the 19th annual NASBR Teacher Workshop. The teacher workshop is an event created in 1995 to provide educators in the city where the Society meets with information and activities about bats that can be shared with students of all ages. Being that the national symposium is usually scheduled close to Halloween it's a perfect time to provide teachers with "batty" resources to use in their classroom holiday plans.

The annual teacher workshop draws a faculty from attendees at the scientific meeting and these generous individuals take time away from the meeting to present a topic or activity to a room full of enthusiastic educators. Given the long history of myth and superstition associated with bats most bat biologists and researchers have always appreciated the value of communicating accurate information about these important and fascinating animals and include public outreach as a vital part of their work.

This year's faculty included Al Hicks, Vesper Environmental Consulting and retired biologist, New York Department of Environmental Conservation, Rob Mies, founder and executive director, Organization for Bat Conservation (MI); Benjamin Hale, bat biologist, Western Ecosystems Technology, Inc. (IN); Dr. Heather York, bat biologist, Buena Vista University (IA); and Leslie Sturges, founder and director, The Save Lucy Campaign (VA). The faculty provided a wide array of presentations about bats showcasing the use of materials and activities. Always a hit with teachers is Rob Mies and his live bats. Each year Rob must make special travel plans and obtain state permits in order to bring his live bats to the workshop.

The Albany workshop hosted 26 pre-registered educators along with dozens of NASBR meeting participants who stopped by to see specific presentations. At times during this year's workshop the room was filled and overflowing—even the hotel staff popped in. NASBR believes that its investment in this annual event produces impactful results. Teachers who attend go back to their classrooms and nature centers and share their new materials and what they have learned with inspire their students to help educate their families and friends about bats.

NASBR could not do the teacher workshop without its much appreciated sponsors. Sponsors this year included **Lubee Bat Conservancy, Organization for Bat Conservation, Speleobooks, The Save Lucy Campaign, Bat Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, and donations from NASBR members.** The Society is grateful to all for their important support of the teacher workshop.

Finally, special thanks to the NASBR meeting hosts Emily Davis and Mike Warner who contributed to the organization and implementation of the teacher workshop in ways too numerous to mention.



The keynote presentation featured bat species of the Northeast and the impacts of the disease “white nose syndrome” on hibernating bats.



Educators participated in a demonstration of how bat biologists capture and remove bats from a mist net.



A teacher got up close and personal with a flying fox bat who has entertained and educated adults and children around the country.



A classroom activity directed at comparing a human hand to a bat wing included a demonstration of making a large wearable bat wing out of plastic and wooden dowels.