



Interview transcripts—Importance of Bats

Tom Rodhouse 006

Bats increasingly; we really appreciate just how important bats are to really human societies. They, it turns out that bats around the world do amazing things for us. They pollinate commercial crops; we get all kinds of spices and other products from plants that depend on bats. That's particularly the case in the tropics. Up here in most of North America where it's colder, we have... most of our bats are insect eating bats, but now we know too; this has been difficult to really quantify or pin down over the years; bats are hard to study. But through recent advances in research, we now know that bats really provide a tremendous source of insect control. And many, they feed heavily on agricultural pests and they follow... some species like the Mexican Free Tail Bat for example, does amazing things. It will actually track the big waves of agricultural pests that come up off of fields in the Southwestern United States and get up at high altitudes and feed on those. There have been estimates of economic benefit in the scale of millions of dollars per year.

Paul Cryan 003

These bats are predators of night-flying insects when very few other things eat them. A lot of those night-flying insects are pest species to agriculture. When we're trying to grow crops these moths and other nocturnal insects are laying their eggs on corn plants, on tomato plants and all the things we eat.

Paul Cryan 004

Without healthy populations of these insectivorous bats to help control the pests, these are free pest control service that farmers are benefitting from all over the continent, without those bats the costs to agriculture could be really substantial.