

STAMP

news & notes

American Bats Make A Postage Stamp Debut

(NAPSA)—Bats, those often misunderstood night friends, are getting their day in the sun. American bats are making their debut on postage stamps.

The Postal Service has the support of the National Wildlife Federation and Bat Conservation International, Inc., to promote the American Bats stamps and National Stamp Collecting Month. Both groups provide educational guides to help children learn about the crucial role bats play in helping to preserve the environment.

This stamp pane consists of four different stamp designs featuring photographs of bats whose ranges include the continental United States.

The red bat is found throughout North America, except for the extreme north, the southern half of Florida and arid regions. It is one of the few bat species that bears two or more young each birth. The red bat is solitary, roosting alone in dense foliage. When it hangs upside down by one foot, its predators may be fooled by its resemblance to a dead leaf. The bat on this stamp is also known as the eastern red bat.

The pallid bat is found in western North America, where its pale, sandy color allows it to blend with its desert surroundings. Its prey consists primarily of crickets, grasshoppers, beetles and other denizens of the desert floor.

The spotted bat is found in the western United States, British Columbia and Mexico where the staple of its diet is believed to be moths. Its ears, the largest of any bat on the continent, measure nearly two inches, and help the spotted bat forage for prey.



This leaf-nosed bat is found primarily in caves. Contrary to one popular myth, bats are not blind. In fact, many have superb night vision.

The leaf-nosed bat is found primarily in caves or abandoned mines in Southern California, Nevada, Arizona and northern Mexico. Its large ears allow it to hear the extremely faint sounds of insects such as grasshoppers and caterpillars walking amid dense foliage, and its large eyes provide excellent night vision.

Of approximately 950 bat species in the world, 45 are found in North America. The only true flying mammals, bats have long been feared and misunderstood, but they are actually beneficial to humans. North American bats help balance populations of night-flying insects, including mosquitoes in our own backyards and pests that cost farmers millions of dollars annually.

The American Bats stamps, and all recently issued stamps and philatelic products, as well as the free USA Philatelic catalog, are available by calling toll free 1-800-STAMP-24. The stamps and a selection of current U.S. stamps and gift items are also available at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop.