

Just like your own neighbors, it is a good idea to know who they are, their children, who they hang out with and more. Where do they go when they leave their house? What to fix if you invited them over for dinner? Are they nice? Are they helpful? How do you protect your neighbors? Seems funny to parallel bats to ourselves, but just wait! This may help you understand the amazing world of bats.

Bats are like us in many ways, first they are mammals. Most females have one baby a year; rarely do they ever have twins. Babies are breast fed for about 2-3 weeks. Before conception, bats attract mates by showing off. Sound like anyone you know?

Baby bats grow fast; begin to flap their wings just like babies start wiggling and turning over. Soon they can navigate on their own, just like when we begin to crawl then walk.

These amazing fliers prefer to go out at night and eat. Do you or your neighbors? Bats "hear" of a good place to eat. And they all go there right away. So do we. Bats and whales have the best hearing in the world. Just like your mother, when your mom hears that you have been especially bad. Or, it is like a bat has eyes or ears in the back of their head, just like moms. How did she hear that? Bats produce a ultra-high frequency sounds, called echolocation, when the sound bounces back the bat could locate a strand of hair in total darkness if it were food. In some instances our neighbor, the bat, can do things better than us.

So they go out and eat at night and stuff themselves with their favorite foods. Only theirs is insects (carnivorous) and some feed exclusively on fruit and its nectar (vegetarians)! They can eat their favorite food. Have you ever said, "I could just eat my weight in ice cream, etc! Some of your neighbors may look like they did! Bats like to eat all night and sleep all day. Sound like anybody you know?

Bats are taught to socialize if their "homes" have large enough front doors. If not, their homes may be no more than bachelor pads. They like to live in a variety of housing. Good places are under house eaves, apartment building eaves, barns, cabins and caves. In today's society people are living in many different kinds of housing concepts including a new trend in boxcars and tractor-trailers called container living. No matter what their address is they can always find their way "home". They use landmarks, just like we do with street signs, buildings, billboards, and gps.

Why are bats so important? Just like your neighbors, who may be farmers, scientists, or doctors everyone has a role to play. These amazing fliers aid in many scientific studies such as navigational or sonar devises for the blind, anti-clotting drugs for stroke and cardiac patients, vaccine production, and low temperature surgical procedures. Seeds dropped by bats are a leading natural technique in reforestation. Their bat guano is used as an astringent in oil cleanup.

As you can tell our own neighborhoods and bat neighbors are more alike than anyone would care to guess.