Adapted from the Going Batty Try-It by Christine and Caroline Stewart

Bats have a bad reputation, but are actually very helpful creatures. A single bat can eat 600 mosquitoes in an hour! This IP will help you learn about how bats see and what bats eat. You can also investigate the myths and realities of bats and their relationship with people.

To earn the Going Batty Interest Project, Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors should do the one REQUIRED activity, do ONE activity of your choice from each of the THREE categories (LEARN, DO, SHARE) , and design and do ONE activity of YOUR OWN. Create a short REFLECTION after you've completed all of the activities

Required: What does a bat habitat entail? If you were a bat, what would you need to survive? Look around your neighborhood or camp and see if you can find the requirements for a bat. Are there any obstacles that might prevent a bat from accessing these requirements?

Learn:
1. Do some research on the web and at the library. What are the bat species native to your area? How are bats classified? Pick a bat and give its full classification, beginning with Kingdom: Animalia.
2. Many people fear bats. Find out the top five reasons people are afraid of bats by conducting a poll among your friends and family. If you have a blog, make it the subject of discussion for the day and find out what people think.
3. Make a sketch of a bat, labeling the ears, teeth (if applicable), nose, wings, claws and eyes. Which senses does your bat rely on the most?
4. Research non-wildlife career fields that would involve you with bats and wildlife. For instance, think about the construction industry, the mining and land reclamation industry or the horticulture industry.
5. What does a wildlife biologist do? How would you become a wildlife biologist or a zoologist? What classes would you need to take in college?

Do:
1. Some bats studied by researchers are tracked using telemetry. Find out how bats are tracked and why. An important resource in this activity is your local university or college. You can also consult with the Department of Conservation or Natural Resources in your state.
2. Bat data is compiled using a database and population statistics. This data is often used to make distribution maps. Research online to find a distribution map for bats and explain it to your troop.
3. Sit out a couple of nights and make a tally of every bat you see. Do this over a time period and compare the number of bats with the weather, or with the presence of other animals or another factor. This is called a correlation study. Can you draw any conclusions based on your data?
4. Make a PowerPoint, poster or other presentation complete with pictures that show the bat species you may encounter at camp and in your neighborhood. Share this with your troop.

Share:

1. Create a bat puppet show with another person and put on an informational show for a younger girl troop. Cover some of the myths and facts about bats.

2. Make a poster for display at your school or local community center that describes the myths and facts about bats – if you conducted a poll to identify the reasons people are afraid of bats, include that information too. Contact your local bat or wildlife sanctuary for more information or suggestions on what to put on your poster.

3. Call a local bat rescue group and ask for advice on building and placing a bat house in your community or at camp (ask permission before placing a bat box on public or Girl Scout property.)

4. Visit with a younger troop and play some bat games with them; Bat and Moth or Marco Polo are good games that demonstrate echolocation. Help them build a bat house.

5. Learn about wildlife sanctuaries and rescue groups. What qualifications does a rescue group have to have? How do you become certified in wildlife rehabilitation?

Going Batty IPs are available at GSSI Council Shops, located at:

Corporate Service Center
#4 Ginger Creek Parkway
Glen Carbon, IL 62034
618.629.0692

Regional Service Center
4102 S. Water Tower Place
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
618.242.5079