



Silver Haired Bat.

To learn more about bats go to
www.batcon.org
or
www.batsnorthwest.org

You may also take the insert
provided and build a bat house for
your backyard.

www.oregonstateparks.org



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Milo McIver Bat Trail

Self Guided Nature Trail

OPRD
INTERPRETIVE
SERIES



Bats have always provoked the imagination and interest of humans.

They are the only mammals that can truly fly. They sleep during the day and can see in the dark. In their history with humans, they have evoked a number of emotions, most notably irrational fear. Although many people understand the environmental benefits of bats—insect and pest control, largely—others hunt them to near extinction out of this irrational fear. Knowing more about these special, important creatures will help combat this senseless reaction.

Worldwide, nearly 1,000 different species of bats exist. Milo McIver State Park is home to about 6 species of bats. The most common types of bats at McIver are shown below.

Little Brown Bat
Myotis lucifugus



Big Brown Bat
Eptesicus fuscus



Silver Haired Bat
Lasionycteris noctivagans



Townsend's Big-eared Bat
Plecotus townsendii



PHOTOS: © Merlin D. Tuttle, Bat Conservation International, Inc. www.batcon.org



Townsend's Big-eared Bat.

STATION 1

Custom Built Homes

As you walk, note the eight bat houses on natural posts located in open areas. Eagle Scouts built and erected these bat houses in 2002 as part of a project to improve bat habitat at the park.

These single chamber bat houses are designed to hold up to 50 bats. Bat houses need lots of sun and proximity to water, and they must be caulked so that they are water and draft proof.

Bats use roosts for various reasons, and use different roosts at different times of the year and even at different times of day or night.

STAY STRAIGHT ON THIS TRAIL TO REACH THE NEXT STOP.



One of eight bat houses in the park.

STATION 2

Home Is Where I Hang My Feet

Look out at the meadow before you. This meadow and the surrounding forest habitat are hunting grounds for bats. Some common North American bat homes or roosts are caves, tall trees, tree cavities, bridges, mines and buildings, such as the barn at McIver. A bat's typical hunting range is several miles. In North America, bat predators include owls, red-tailed hawks, snakes, raccoons, and even foxes. You can add humans to this list as well. Needless fear and lack of education cause many bats to be senselessly killed by humans.

Self Guided Nature Trail

- Legend**
- Bat Trail
 - Other Trails
 - Service Road
 - Interpretive Sign
 - Point of Interest
 - Hiking Trail
 - Horse Trail

Can You See In Total Darkness?

For years, people wondered how bats could fly at night without crashing into things. In the 1930's scientists discovered that bats have a kind of natural sonar that allows them to "see" with their ears! Using only sound, bats can follow and catch prey in total darkness. This amazing sonar system is called echolocation (EK-oh-loh-KAY-shun).

A bat knows when an insect is near, because the sounds echo, or bounce, off of it and return to the bat's ears. When the bat hears the echo, it can locate the insect immediately. Once the bat has zeroed in on its target, it grabs the insect with its mouth, or scoops it up with its wing or tail membrane.

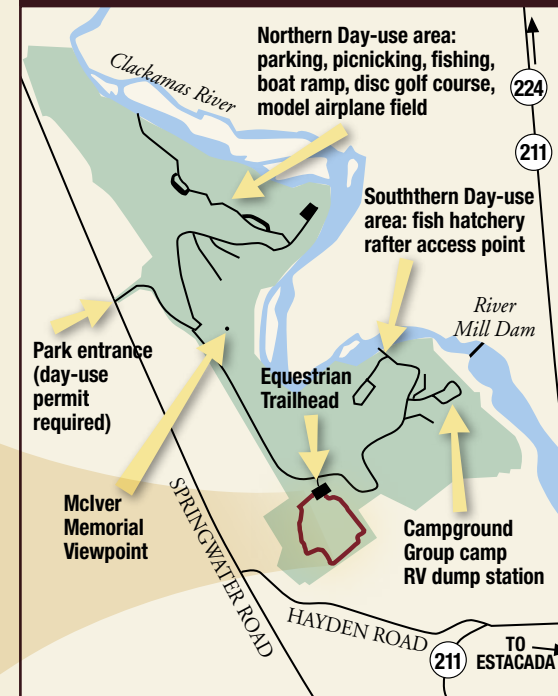
THE TRAIL SPLITS AHEAD.

GO RIGHT AT THE INTERSECTION. ANOTHER SPLIT IS AHEAD. GO LEFT TOWARDS THE BARN.



Townsend's Big-eared Bat.

Milo McIver State Park



STATION 4

The Bat Barn

This barn has been used in the past for storage and as a horse concession. In 1998, Park staff discovered that the bats living in this barn during the summer are very special. This is one of few nursery colonies in Oregon used by a bat that is listed as a species of special concern.

This nursery colony is made up entirely of female Townsend's Big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) that arrive in the summer to give birth to their pups. A mother bat gives birth to only one pup each year and the bond between mother bat and pup is strong. The mother bat has a special call for her pup, so that she can find her baby in a nursery of many. She grooms and nurses her pup until it is old enough to hunt on its own. The mothers and their pups stay in the roost until early fall when the pups are strong enough to make the flight to their winter roost. Nursery colonies are very sensitive to human disturbance. Please help us respect this sensitive roost.

RETURN TO THE TRAIL. FOLLOW IT TO THE LEFT THROUGH THE MEADOW.

Little Brown Bat.

STATION 5

Fast Food

The main diet of bats at McIver is made up of moths, beetles and mosquitoes. Bats can consume up to 500 mosquitoes in one hour! Bats eat up to 50% of their body weight in insects every night. Can you imagine eating half your weight in food every day?

Townsend's Big-eared bats eat *Noctuidae* moths, which are pests that can harm crops. A healthy population of bats ensures a natural, pesticide-free method of controlling insects.

Some moths have evolved interesting tactics to elude bat attacks. Some species have fuzzy wings that will reflect bat echolocation pulses. Once a bat is detected, these moths may fly in loops, make their own echolocating noises to startle the bat, or fold up their wings and dive to avoid capture.

STATION 6

Myth vs. Reality

Bats are feared only because they are misunderstood. Due to myth and superstition, fear of bats has endangered bat species worldwide. The greatest myth—that bats are dirty and carry rabies—is the number one reason people fear bats. Like most mammals, bats can contract rabies. However, it is a misconception that most bats are rabid. Research shows that less than one percent of bats contract rabies. Unlike dogs and cats, rabid bats seldom become aggressive.

However, any bat found on the ground should be considered sick and should never be touched. If you find a bat on the ground, alert a park ranger immediately.

THE TRAIL ENDS HERE. FOLLOW THE ROAD BACK TO THE GRAVEL PARKING AREA.