



Bat World Sanctuary Volunteer Guidelines

Welcome

The volunteer program at Bat World Sanctuary is an important part of our day-to-day operations. As a non-profit organization, our sole focus is on providing the best care possible to both bats in need of rehabilitation for release and those for whom Bat World will be a permanent home. Volunteers assist with a number of essential functions that keep our facility clean, in good repair, and functioning smoothly.

Volunteers are assigned tasks based on skill level, prior experience, and, in some cases, physical capability. At no time will volunteers who are not vaccinated for rabies be allowed to handle or have contact with the insectivorous bats in our care. This policy is not negotiable, and is intended to protect both the bats and the volunteer. Individuals who wish to be vaccinated against rabies must do so at their own expense.

During your volunteer experience at Bat World, we encourage you to embrace the opportunity to learn as much as possible about bats and the crucial role they play in the health of our planet – indeed, they are essential to our very survival. Our Mission is to provide permanent sanctuary for non-releasable bats, the protection and conservation of wild bat colonies, promoting the humane treatment of bats in captivity, educating the public about the importance of bats and training animal caregivers on the proper treatment of bats.

Bat World Sanctuary is the largest rescue/rehabilitation/teaching sanctuary in the world that is dedicated exclusively to bats. We do not work with any other species – no rabbits, squirrels, songbirds, or reptiles come to Bat World Sanctuary for care. As the most misunderstood group of animals on the planet, bats are not only essential to all life on earth, they are also in grave peril due to habitat loss, hunting, diseases such as White Nose Syndrome, and, worst of all, human ignorance. At Bat World Sanctuary, we care for these animals, restoring them to health and releasing native species when possible; providing them with lifetime sanctuary when flying free is not an option.

History

Bat World Sanctuary was founded by Amanda Lollar in 1994 in Mineral Wells, Texas, after she found an injured Brazilian Free-tail (aka Mexican free-tail) bat on the sidewalk on a hot summer day. With no information available on how to properly care for the bat, Amanda followed her instincts and observed how the bat, whom she named Sunshine, responded. Through determination and perseverance, Sunshine survived her injuries and lived with Amanda for over two years – a remarkable feat at that time. Since then, Amanda has established protocols on the rehabilitation of insectivorous bats which has resulted in the longest lived captive Brazilian free-tailed bat, "Andy", who was born at Bat World on April 12, 2001. In the past decade, Amanda has personally trained over 400 biologists, conservation scientists, wildlife rehabilitators, veterinarians, zoologists and other animal care professionals from around the world on the care and rehabilitation of insectivorous bats.

Bat World Sanctuary Today

Bat World Sanctuary is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization, and is a verified member of the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) and the American Sanctuary Association (ASA). Located on private property just outside of Cool, Texas, we remain a primarily volunteer-based organization supported through donations and grants.

About these Guidelines

This manual has been developed to explain what volunteers can do to help support Bat World Sanctuary, and what is expected of each volunteer. We believe that clear understanding of expectations and responsibilities is the foundation for a long and mutually beneficial association.

Policies and attitudes may change over time, and this manual is considered to be a living document, subject to modification as dictated by the needs of the Sanctuary and the animals we serve. Bat World Sanctuary reserves the right to add to, delete from, or modify any of the policies contained in this manual, either on an individual basis or for the organization as a whole. Such additions, deletions, or modifications are made at the discretion of the Bat World Sanctuary Board of Directors jointly, or by the President/Founder when immediate action is required, and an effective date will be specified within each amendment to the document.

This manual is not intended to, and does not create, any contractual obligations for Bat World Sanctuary. Consistent with requirements under State and Federal law, it is the policy of Bat World Sanctuary to recruit and train individual volunteers based upon qualifications and the needs of the organization, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or other physical or social characteristics. Bat World Sanctuary reserves the right to terminate any volunteer association when it is in the best interest of the organization that such action be taken.

Bat World Sanctuary Programs and Services

Native Species Bats

Bat World Sanctuary (BWS) accepts orphaned, ill, and injured native species bats for rehabilitation and release. We maintain a national network of qualified rehabilitators who are specifically trained to care for bats, and provide a Local Rescue lookup service through our website at batworld.org/local-rescue.

Non-Native Bats

BWS also provides lifetime sanctuary for non-native bats who are retired from zoos and research facilities, or who are rescued from the exotic pet trade. These bats are often traumatized by their encounters with humans, and it is our goal to provide them with safety, security, and a peaceful existence. As a result, we are not open to the general public at any time whatsoever nor do we permit the disruption of any bat's resting cycle by volunteers or staff unless a situation calls for immediate intervention.

Social Media, Publications and Community Outreach

Through our Facebook page, books and publications, and through programs led by our Board of Directors, BWS educates thousands of people every day, around the globe. Although our facility is not open to the general public at any time, on occasion, the President/Founder and/or the Officers of the Board may invite select individuals to the facility (i.e. State and Federal licensing authorities, consulting professionals (i.e. veterinarians, researchers), and, occasionally, members of the media).

Media Relations

Any requests for interviews, comments, articles, video, photographs, or other information and materials must be referred to the President/Founder or designated members of the Board of Directors. Only those individuals authorized to do so may respond to such requests.

Policies and Position Statements

Bat World has developed a number of policies and position statements that guide our daily operations and interactions with the media, the public, and other organizations/institutions. While volunteers are not called upon to respond to public or media inquiries, it is important that you be familiar with, understand, and comply with our policies, procedures, and position statements. Additional position statements may be found at www.batworld.org/position-statements.

Volunteer Positions

There are several volunteer opportunities at Bat World Sanctuary. Every effort will be made to match volunteers' interests and skill level with the appropriate role. Saturday/Sunday and Holiday shifts are always available. Typical working hours are 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM but may be extended during orphan season or when we are involved in a large rescue requiring a significant number of bats to be brought into rehab.

Administrative/Office Volunteer

In this role, volunteers assist with daily operations in the Bat World Sanctuary office. Duties include answering telephone calls, receiving packages/deliveries, filling and shipping orders, preparing Adopt-a-Bat packets, and running errands. This position does not involve any direct animal contact.

Fruit Bat Care Volunteer

Volunteers in this role are responsible for helping to clean the fruit bat enclosure, removing/replacing enrichment items as needed, and assisting with visual inspection of the fruit bats to ensure none of the bats require medical attention (accomplished during treat time). Please refer to the Daily Chart that hangs from the locker in the fruit bats' enclosure which describes in detail the duties of maintaining the fruit bat enclosure.

Insectivorous Bat Care Volunteer

Volunteers in this role must be vaccinated for rabies before starting to work with the bats and abide by our Safe Handling Protocol posted on the clinic wall. Responsibilities include cleaning the insectivorous bat enclosure, cleaning/preparing mealworms, preparing complete soft diet, washing feeding containers and water dishes, removing/replacing enrichment items as needed, and assisting with hand-feeding permanent resident bats. Please refer to the Daily Chart in the clinic which describes in detail the duties of maintaining the insectivorous enclosure as well as their care.

Fruit Bat Food Prep Volunteer

Volunteers in this role are responsible for helping prepare fruit for the bats, washing and refilling feeding containers, water dishes, and juice bottles. Typical working hours are 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Please refer to the chart that hangs in the kitchen which describes in detail the duties of making the daily fruit and treats for the fruit bats.

Facility Cleaning

Refer to the Cleaning Checklist hanging in the kitchen. We typically clean the entire facility on Saturday but welcome cleaning at anytime throughout the week, particularly if you notice something that obviously needs to be cleaned. NOTE: The bat enclosures, the kitchen and the clinic are cleaned daily; the facility is cleaned weekly.

General Rules and Requirements

- If you are unable to work an assigned shift, a staff member must be notified. Volunteers who fail to report for an assigned shifts without prior notification will not be welcome back to volunteer.
- Punctuality is important; there is a great deal of work to be done every day. If you are going to be late for your assigned shift, a staff member must be notified as soon as possible. Chronic tardiness will be grounds for termination.
- The work at Bat World can be a bit messy so t-shirts, sneakers and casual wear are encouraged. High-heeled shoes are not allowed in the flight enclosures. All volunteers are expected to be hygienic in dress and appearance, including clothes, hair and fingernails.
- Although we encourage and engage in a fun and light-hearted atmosphere, three topics are not allowed for discussion while volunteering: Religion, Politics and Racism - no exceptions.
- The use of tobacco, illegal drugs and alcohol on any and all property owned by Bat World Sanctuary is not allowed, nor is exceedingly offensive or abusive language and behavior.
- A locker is provided to place your personal items. Please ask beforehand which locker is available before placing your items within.
- Charts are found in each room that specifically describe, step-by-step, the various duties involved for the care of the fruit bats, the insect bats, diet preparation, office work and cleaning. If you arrive late please refer to the chart to see how far along the staff is in the duties involved, and then take it from that place forward.
- Always return kitchen dishes and utensils to the area where they were found. If unsure of where they go please ask.
- If you are not assigned to office duties please do not disturb anyone working in the office.
- Avoid talking loudly at all times, most particularly when new arrivals are being treated and when staff is using the office phone.
- The bats at Bat World Sanctuary are not domesticated animals. Bats are wild animals and, as with any wild animal, there is a risk of being bitten or scratched if they become frightened. To avoid unnecessarily frightening the bats, always speak softly and move without haste when inside their enclosures.
- Always wash your hands before entering any of the enclosures.
- Never push, follow, or repeatedly offer treats that a bat has already refused. Never attempt to capture any of the bats.
- Do not take photos without permission.
- Only one volunteer is allowed in the fruit bats cage at a time
- Never rearrange items in any enclosure and never leave items that do not belong.