



POSITION STATEMENT

PROPER HANDLING TECHNIQUE FOR BATS IN LABORATORY AND FIELD RESEARCH

Many researchers utilize a cruciform holding technique when working with bats, whether in the laboratory or in the field. This technique involves grasping the bat by the scruff of the neck, and pinching at the scapula to pull the wings back. This position supposedly allows the researcher to examine the wings or perform other procedures while restricting the bat's mobility, presumably to afford some protection from potential bites. Another holding technique often utilized by researchers involved holding the bat by its fingertips, wings outstretched and torso dangling in mid air. This position is often used for photographs.

It is Bat World Sanctuary's position that the above handling techniques are inhumane. These techniques are physically uncomfortable as well as painful for the bat, which causes significant stress and increases the propensity of being bitten by the bat.

Properly trained individuals are able to photograph bats, as well as handle bats, examine wings, treat injuries, and perform other procedures while holding the bat in a comfortable, natural position without any risk of being bitten.

Researchers who must work with bats in either a laboratory or field setting are encouraged to use ethical and humane handling techniques. Researchers are welcome to contact Bat World Sanctuary to discuss appropriate handling techniques. Bat World Sanctuary will be happy to review proposed research protocols before they are submitted for IACUC approval, to ensure that feeding, housing, and enrichment plans are appropriate to the species in question. Bat World Sanctuary may also be able to answer questions posed in the research proposal, thus reducing or eliminating the need for invasive procedures.