

**Krieble, Leah, “The Effect of a Local Bat Education Program on Costa Rican Schoolchildren: Learning and Perceptions.” Advisor: Bernal Rodríguez. Macalester College. 2010. 37pp.**

This study investigated the effects of a two to four hour bat education program implemented by the Tirimbina Biological Reserve from March to May, 2010 in Sarapiquí County, Costa Rica. The program was designed to familiarize and teach students with bats and the objective of this study was to measure the program’s effectiveness in terms of students’ acquirement of knowledge and change in level of positive perception using pre and post surveys. The participants included 17 students from Tirimbina and 42 students from San Isidro in primary school (grades 1 – 6).

The results demonstrated that the bat education program was successful in teaching factual information as shown by the increase in correct answers from 42% before to 72% after participation in the program. Students also demonstrated a significant positive change in general perception of these animals, particularly in their levels of fear and perceptions of danger towards bats. After learning the facts, students also seemed to base their opinions less on the myth that “bats are vampires that feed on blood” and felt it was more important to help these animals. The results also reinforced the importance in teacher participation, review sessions and presentation design in the process of teaching and learning about the environment.