

CONDO HOA

MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE

Cover Story

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- » Florida - The new Transylvania?
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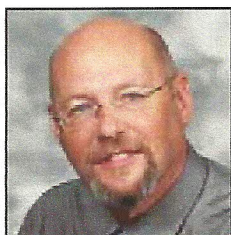
Dianne Tosi



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By John Greenwood

Most Florida residents know that our state is fundamentally a huge wildlife sanctuary. However, not many people know that of the total mammal population of the Sunshine State, approximately 25 percent to 50 percent of the animals are actually bats. Of all 50 states in the USA, only Texas has more bats than Florida!

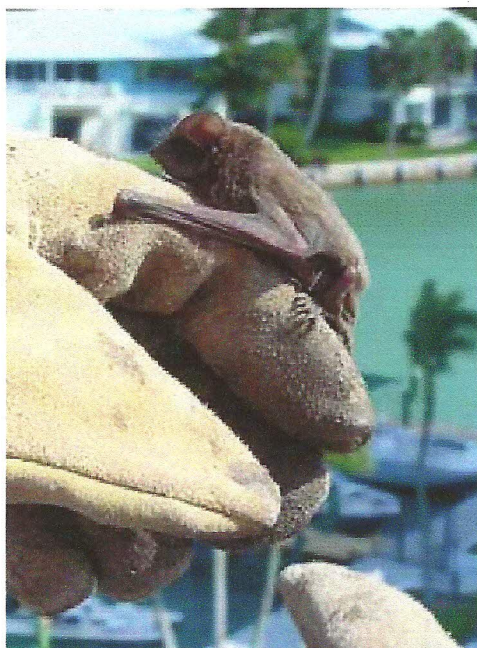
FLORIDA - THE NEW TRANSYLVANIA?

Around 15 different species of bats call the southernmost state their home, and of these, 14 species are of the sub-order microchiroptera (or small hand-wing). "Chiroptera" means that the wings consist of long, bony fingers with a thin skin membrane stretched between them; "micro" suggests that 14 of the 15 different Florida species are very small. The latest of these species are new arrivals from Cuba. We think the Jamaican Fruit Bats, living in Key West, were blown here during the hurricanes.

With the exception of the few fruit bats, all of the other "chiroptera" here are insectivores. Each individual bat can eat 2,000 to 3,000 small flying insects per night, including small moths and mosquitoes. Without bats, we would need to use tons of noxious chemicals to control the mosquito larvae throughout the Everglades and in the canals and waterways of Florida. Some species of bats live in the dead fronds of palm trees, but most like to live in manmade structures. The most common of these is the Mexican/Brazilian Free-Tailed Bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*), whose colonies can number in the hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands and whose life expectancy is around 34 years.

Even though they are enormously beneficial to the environment, large colonies of bats can and do cause problems for people when the two coexist in the same environment. The odor from bats' excrement and urine and the resulting staining on buildings is a concern. The buildup of waste products in building voids can be excessive and poses possible health risks to people. One of the most serious of these is histoplasmosis, which is a fungal disease associated with bat guano (feces) deposits. Once inhaled, it grows in the lungs and can ultimately lead to

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John Greenwood - Transylvania?...

Rabies is also a concern and can be contracted from contact between infected saliva or nervous tissues and the mucous membranes found in the eyes, nose and mouth. It can also enter the body through open wounds. However, it is almost always transmitted by a bite from the infected animal, and only a very small percentage of the bat population is thought to carry the disease.

In Florida, all species of bats are protected animals. This legislation applies year-round. Specialist companies with the necessary expertise are permitted to perform humane exclusions during much of the year, using methodologies that ensure the animals vacate buildings safely and guaranteeing that they cannot return. However, there is an extended period of time during which even companies are forbidden to perform such exclusions. This period is referred to as bat maternity season.

Bats are mammals, giving birth to live young and suckling their babies ("pups"). If an exclusion were to be performed when the newly born pups are present and as yet unable to fly, they would be separated from their mothers and die in the roost. This period extends from April 16 through August 14.

The alert reader may have noticed that despite the reference to Transylvania in the title of this piece, no mention has been made of much-dreaded vampire bat. This is because there are no vampire bats indigenous to Florida (or anywhere else in the United States). The only encounter we North Americans may have with one will likely be in a zoo!

John Greenwood is the customer & technical consultant for Winged Wildlife Control/Friends of Bats in Florida.

FROM OUR MAILBOX

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Can you please tell me the Florida statute referenced in the article regarding membership directories? (February 2011 - The Association Barrister: New condominium and HOA acts may affect association membership directories - By Peter S. Sachs) I don't question that it is there, I just can't find it and need to bring it to my board as we are in the process of updating our neighborhood directory.

Thank you very much.

Carol Smith, president, The Reserve at Cypress Point HOA

It is located in the sections that list what are considered official records of the association. That would be 718.111(12) for condos and 720.303(5) for homeowners associations. The key is to look at the list of the items that are listed as inspectable by the members and to note that certain items are specifically exempted from access.

Steven G. Rappaport, Esq., Sachs Sax Caplan, Boca Raton, Fla.

Ad Summary

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GAB Robins

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**J.R. Frazer Appraisals
& Reserves**

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ATTORNEYS

Katzman Garfinkel & Berger

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Tripp Scott, P.A.

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MANAGEMENT

**Aegis Community Management
Solutions Inc.**

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Condominium Associates

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Management & Associates

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**Orlando Community Association
Managers Group (OCAM)**

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Sentry Management Inc.

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RESERVE STUDIES

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