

Bats subject of symposium

By Pat Dinslage
Staff Reporter

"Bats in the belfry," "blind as a bat," and bats getting caught in people's hair are common perceptions about bats — and they're not true, said Merlin Tuttle, founder of Bat Conservation International.

Tuttle and about 200 scientists, educators and graduate students from around the world gathered in Lincoln this weekend to exchange information and present new and continuing research on bats.

Bats live in colonies, usually in caves, and their echolocation — or radar — system is very sophisticated — too sophisticated for them to blunder into anyone's hair, according to BCI research. Bats have good vision and are mammals, not rodents.

Such misunderstanding of bats is the biggest threat to them, Tuttle said, because people try to kill them off.

"People kill them out of fear. We need to educate people to understand why bats are important," he said.

People have set fire to caves where bats live and wiped out a whole colony or vandalized the roosts, Tuttle said.

"In the United States, 40 percent

of the species of bats have been declared endangered or are on the list for endangered species," Tuttle said. "Bats are one of the species most vulnerable to endangerment."

Patricia Freeman, bat researcher, zoology curator and associate professor for the University of Nebraska State Museum, said most of the research reported at this weekend's symposium concerned worldwide destruction of bat habitats.

Destruction of bats' roosts in the tropical rainforest is the worst in the world, she said.

"Caverns are being blown up, forests cut down, which limits the insects" which are the source of food for the bats, she said. "Only 4 percent of England is forest now, and when the forests are gone, the bats die."

Freeman said that the 1,000 species of bats represent one-fourth of the total 4,000 species of mammals on earth.

Freeman is working on a survey of where in Nebraska bats are located.

There are 13 species of bats identified as natives of Nebraska, she said. Nine of the species are hibernating bats and four species migrate.

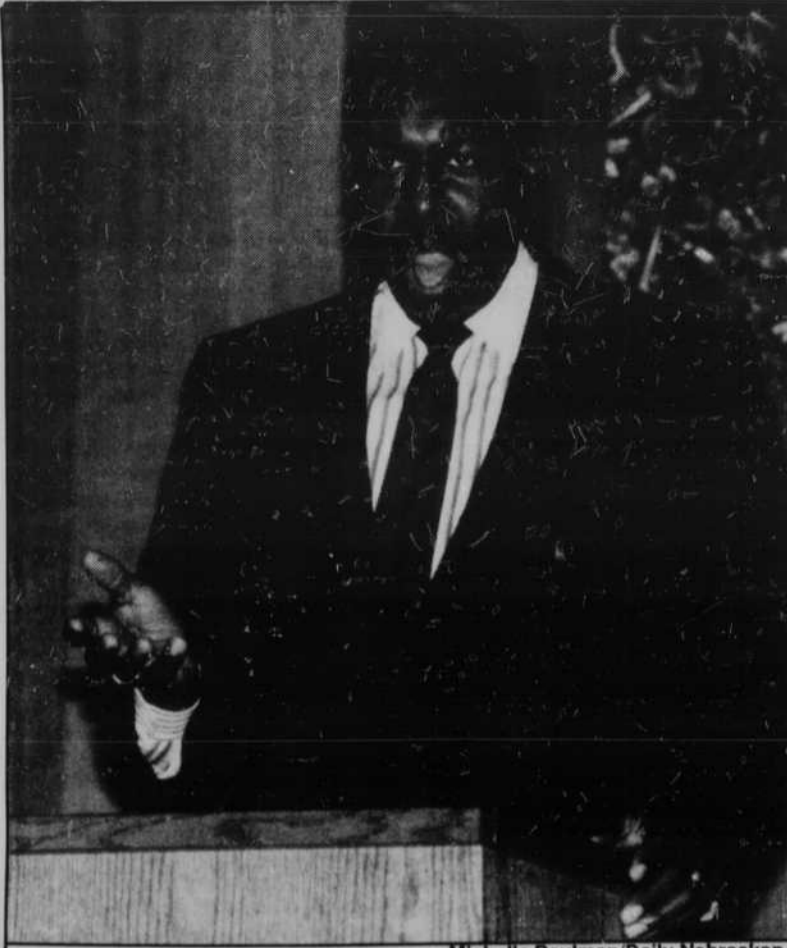
But researchers are not sure where they migrate to or even exactly where the bats are located in Nebraska and how they survive, Freeman said. Many species seem to live in the eastern and western parts of the state.

"There are limestone caves and quarries in the eastern part of the state," she said, "and we're worried that if these are demolished, we may be hurting the few available roosting sites in the state."

Despite the extent of research already performed on bats, researchers really don't know that much about them, Freeman said.

Two of the major problems in bat research, she said, are locating the roosts of the bats and capturing them for study. But with the miniaturization and sophistication of electronic detection equipment, researchers are better able to capture the bats, she said.

Researchers also have difficulty studying bats because of the bats' habits — they roost in the day and fly at night when they are difficult to see and study. Bats often change the locations of their roosts, making it difficult for researchers to locate the colonies, Freeman said.



Michelle Paulman/Daily Nebraskan

Freeman Davis, director of the Minority and Women's Small Business Assistance Center, speaks at the Culture Center, 333 N. 14th St., on Sunday.

Davis

Continued from Page 1

The minority population is influenced by consumerism, but of \$200 billion being spent by minorities, only 5 percent is circulated back, Davis said.

For minorities to battle this, moral elements and traditions from cultural pasts must be brought back, he said, and the cultures must unify if anything is to be accomplished.

Minorities must "implement self-esteem values and standards and put them back vibrantly," he said. "We must put back the respect to

our cultural images."

Generations of minority youth might be lost unless communities invest in them by turning youth away from illegal means, such as selling drugs, of making money, Davis said.

Manufacturing and industrial opportunities instead of small mom-and-pop businesses would further minority business involvement, he said.

Minorities also must try to take the driver's seat economically, he said, because the drivers traditionally have been white.

"The faster the car goes," he said, "we just can't jump out."

in brief

NEWS

Forum on 2 percent lid today at Nebraska Union Ballroom

Collegiate Organizations Informing Nebraskans will sponsor a 2 percent lid forum today at 7 p.m.

Ed Jaksha, sponsor of the proposed 2 percent lid; Gary Oxley, Tri-County High School Superin-

tendent; Roger Christianson, director of the Department of Economic Development; and Charles Lamphear, director of the Bureau of Business Research at UNL, will speak in the Nebraska Union Ball-

room. The lid amendment, which will go before Nebraska voters Nov. 6, would limit state and local government spending increases to 2 percent each year.

Sheldon panel to discuss documentary films' influence

"Social Change in the Nineties?" is the title of a panel discussion set for 7 p.m. Thursday at the Sheldon Film Theater.

The discussion will focus on the effectiveness of documentary films in influencing social change.

Panelists for the discussion include Liane Brandon, a Boston-based filmmaker and one of the founding members of New Day; Bettina Hurst, state coordinator for Nebraskans for Peace; Nell Eckersley, University of Nebraska-Lin-

coln student and Early Warning! member; John Taylor, spokesman for the Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights; and June Levine, a UNL professor of English and film studies, who will serve as moderator.

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