



# 2011 International Bat Film Festival

[www.batfilmfest.com](http://www.batfilmfest.com)

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## **Film Festival Hopes to Save America's Bats**

*Emmy Award Winner Richard Wiese Hosts Event to Benefit Bat Conservationists*

**April 15 2011 (New York, NY)** – Richard Wiese, star of *The World Explorer*, will host the First Annual Bat Film Festival to benefit bat conservationists working to save bats from White-Nose Syndrome, a disease that is decimating North American bat populations.

“When I heard about White-Nose Syndrome and the possibility of regional extinctions of some of America’s most common bats, I knew something had to be done,” said Richard Wiese. “People don’t understand how amazing these furry flying mammals are. Hopefully, the film festival will be a unique and fun way to draw attention to the importance of bats to a healthy environment.”

The International Bat Film Festival will honor films that have entertained and educated viewers about bats. Biologists and bat experts will be on hand to debunk myths, explain how bats benefit the planet and share the latest news on White-Nose Syndrome that has killed more than 1 million bats in the past four years. Live bats will be in attendance and are guaranteed to make everyone fall in love with these majestic animals.

Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) will be honored with the “Public Leadership/Stewardship Award” for their work in Congress to address White-Nose syndrome.

"White-Nose Syndrome is a wildlife emergency that deserves our attention," said Senator Lautenberg, who recently introduced the 'Wildlife Disease and Emergency Act' and last year secured \$1.9 million in federal funding for White-Nose Syndrome research. "Bats play a vital role in our ecosystem by preying on insects that destroy crops and carry disease. There is an urgent need to research this problem so that bat populations in New Jersey and throughout the country are not decimated. Without more public awareness and a quick response, white-nose syndrome could have a ripple effect that hurts the economy, environment, and public health."

"Bats are extraordinary creatures that play a pivotal and often unseen role in the balance of nature," said Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), a leader of efforts in the U.S. Senate to raise awareness about White-Nose Syndrome and to secure federal WNS research funding. "With their populations collapsing at a rate never before seen, we can expect more insects destroying crops and more mosquitoes spreading disease. These are threats to farmers, to public health, to the larger economy and to the ecology of vast regions of the nation that we must tackle now, and urgently. We still know far too little about White-Nose Syndrome, how it is spread and how it might be managed or contained. Investments in research and bat conservation today to protect our threatened bat populations will help prevent billions of dollars in agricultural losses and pest damage before it is too late."

The First International Bat Film Festival will be held at on April 30th at The Explorers Club in New York City. **This event is open to the general public. To find out more about how to attend and to learn about bats, go to [www.batfilmfest.com](http://www.batfilmfest.com).**

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Richard Wiese and Senator Leahy (Senator Leahy will be in Washington) are available for radio or television appearances or print interviews. Bat keeper Joe D'Angeli is happy to appear on television with live bats.

About Richard Wiese:

In 2002, Richard Wiese was elected the youngest President in The Explorers Club's hundred-year history. During his Presidency, Richard had the honor of speaking at the United Nations, the Royal Geographical Society, Bohemian Grove, Philadelphia Academy of Science, NY Public Library, University of Miami School of Engineering and in the Congress of Argentina. The fabled society's members have included

such legends as Teddy Roosevelt, Neil Armstrong, Charles Lindberg, Bob Ballard, Jane Goodall, and Sir Edmund Hillary.

Richard has hosted many nationally broadcast television shows, including Exploration with Richard Wiese, and is also a team member of the highly acclaimed series with the BBC and Discovery Channel called The Hottest Place on Earth. Among his many accomplishments, Wiese achieved the first ascent of an unclimbed mountain in Alaska, discovered 29 new life forms on Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa, and cross-country skied to the North Pole.

In 2007 Richard was involved in the first microbial survey of Central Park in NYC resulting in the discovery of 202 new and unique life forms. In 2009, he filmed segments on African survival tips for The History Channel's new series on Stanley and Livingston.