

## **Animal Show Delights Kids**

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Do you know why a bat hangs upside down? Ask one of the children who attended a wildlife presentation at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. They'll never forget because they met two African bats face to face.

Tom Batchelor, owner of Pangaea Productions, Inc., gave a presentation as part of the "Ecology and Human Life" exhibition held here recently. His presentation stressed the importance of saving the animals' natural habitat to ensure their survival.

All the participants were allowed to touch most of the animals, from the American alligator to the Burmese python.

The children's favorite seemed to be the Florida panther. The panther has drastically dwindled in numbers and is on an endangered species list, along with many other Florida Everglades inhabitants. Due to the encroachment of humankind, in just 50 years the panther has gone from 1,600 to 40 in the wild.

The most important aspect of the animal exhibit was the lasting impact it had on the children. We asked them what they could do to save the animals, and here are some their answers: Stephanie Sawyer, 8, said, "I like all of the animals, and we should stop spraying pesticide on the mosquitoes because the bats eat the mosquitoes and die."

Bianca Golden, 9, learned how important it is to leave the animals alone in their natural habitats. She would like to become a famous performer, and after her performances talk to the audience about taking better care of the wild animals' homes.

Samuel Bernal, 10, believes we can save them by not destroying their homes.

Whether the children remember that bats hang upside down because their feet are too small to stand on, they did get the message: It is up to each of us to take the action necessary to save our wild animals. Hopefully, our children's children will see these animals in their natural habitat and not just in a zoo.

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