



Cypress Creek Nature Preserve begins near downtown Wimberley. Follow the creek trail to Blue Hole Regional Park, where there is a popular swimming hole. Towering above are beautiful old cypress trees. The trees keep the water cool and clean. They provide shade and prevent erosion of the creek. Walk along the nature trail toward town and you can see the RR 12 bridge. A large colony of Mexican free-tailed bats lives under the bridge.

KNOW

Mexican free-tailed bats *(Tadarida brasiliensis)*



Millions of Mexican free-tailed bats live in Central Texas during the summer. The female bats stay in caves and under bridges, where they raise their young.

At sunset, the bats fly out from under the bridge in search of food.

Bats are:

- Unique—they are the only mammal that can fly.
- Nocturnal—they are active at night.
- Helpful—they eat tons of bugs like mosquitoes and moths.

The best months to see bats are from the middle of March until early November. The bats return to Mexico when the weather gets cold.

Never touch a bat. If you see a bat on the ground, leave it alone.

GROW



Be a Wildlife Detective

Your mission is to observe the signs and behavior of wildlife. Be on the lookout any time of day or night for animals on the ground or in the air. Find clues that the animals have been around. Look for tracks, scat (droppings), bent grass, or feathers.

Record your observations below.

Clues: _____

Animal: _____

Where Sighted: _____

Time of day/night: _____

Animal behavior: _____

Animal: _____

Clues: _____

Where Sighted: _____

Time of day/night: _____

Animal behavior: _____

Turn Out Your Lights at Night!

Owls, raccoons, and other animals hunt for food at night. Dark skies also help animals that migrate, like bats and birds. Too much light can confuse them. You can help by turning off outside lights when you do not need them. Talk to your family about the types of lights that don't disturb animals.



