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Weather



TODAY:
SUNNY

HIGH OF -1
LOW OF -9



TUESDAY:
CLOUDY

HIGH OF 5
LOW OF -8



WEDNESDAY:
MIX OF SUN
AND CLOUDS

HIGH OF 7
LOW OF -1



THURSDAY:
CLOUDY,
SHOWERS

HIGH OF 8
LOW OF -8



FRIDAY:
SUNNY

HIGH OF 5
LOW OF -6

Promoting Bat Conservation in Potton



THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

On Saturday, April 14 the Municipality of Potton Sustainable Development (environment, economy and social life) committee will welcome a new organization-Bat Conservation of the Eastern Townships (BCET) for a bilingual presentation at the Town Hall in Mansonville, 2 rue Vale Perkins starting at 10:00am.

The conference will feature Victor Grivegnée-Dumoulin, biologist and chief spokesperson at BCET. Citizens from surrounding municipalities are also welcome to attend.

The aim of the conference is to provide information about the local bat population, which is disappearing at an alarming rate due to highly contagious fungal infection. Bats are important contributors to the health of our ecosystem. Raising public awareness and encouraging the regeneration of bats in our environment is vital.

"The conference will be very significant in terms of providing much needed information about the bat ecology in the Eastern Townships," explained Alexandra Leclerc, Municipal employee in charge of Environment and Hygiene. "There is power in knowledge and we are hoping that in providing the facts in regards to our bat population we will be able to stress the concern in terms of our ecosystem and the necessity of preserving them."

Bats in Quebec are separated into two different groups depending on their ability to survive during the winter. Five Quebec species of bat are categorized as



DANIEL JAUVIN

cave dwellers and three are grouped as migratory species.

Many factors contribute to the abundance of different species of bats in Quebec. The main cause for their demise is illness, loss of habitat, the use of pesticides and disturbance by humans (Fenton 2001).

Besides contributing to biodiversity, the bats in Quebec help to eliminate many insects that are considered nuisances in agriculture and diminish the need for the use of pesticides (Boisseau, 2014). One study indicates that the bat's insect consumption permits the agricultural domain to save 3.7 million dollars annually in North America (Boisseau, 2014).

In 2006, a mushroom (*Pseudogymnoascus destructans*) from Europe made its way to North America and more precisely, to Quebec (MFFP, 2015). The syndrome spread and began to affect bats, in particular, the cave dwellers attacking the tissue of the bats in hibernation and leaving many too weak to survive hiber-

nation throughout the winter months. In the last few years, certain populations of insect-eating bats have been decimated! This has caused an imbalance in the food chain of our ecosystems. It is estimated that 5.7 to 6.7 million bats have died since the disease arrived (Dumouchel, 2015). According to the COSEPAC data, there are approximately 94% of the Pipistrelle bat population, 98% of brown bats and 99.8% of the northern bats that will die as a result of the disease.

The members of the Potton Sustainable Development Committee are hoping for a large turnout for this informative conference. One needs only imagine our summer skies at dusk without the familiar sight of bats to feel the sadness in this situation. It is time to get the facts and see what we can all be doing to save the bats and strengthen our ecosystem.

For more information, visit www.conservationchauvesouris.com

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Ben by Daniel Shelton

Panel 1: A boy in a hat says, "THIS IS PRETTY MUCH THE LAST OF THE SNOW...".

Panel 2: Two boys walking away.

Panel 3: A boy says, "NICHOLAS!".

Panel 4: A boy says, "WE'RE STOCK-PILING SO WE CAN BE READY FOR ANY THREAT OVER THE SUMMER!".

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4/9
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