



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

White-Nose Syndrome

Conserving the Nature of America



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White-Nose Syndrome: Something is killing our bats

Current News

[See map at bottom of page](#)

A bat from a cave in northwest Oklahoma has tested positive for the fungus associated with WNS.

According to Director of the U.S. Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisc., Dr. Jonathan Sleeman, laboratory tests detected the genetic signature of the fungus in a single bat

submitted from Oklahoma. He noted the presentation on the Oklahoma bat was not typical of the way WNS has been observed in bats in the eastern United States. This is the first discovery of the fungus in the state and is the most western report of the fungus - about 450 miles from the nearest cave in Missouri having bats with the fungus. This is the first time the fungus has been found in the cave myotis bat (*Myotis velifer*), which ranges throughout the Southeast and into Mexico.

[News Release](#) (pdf)

[Bat Conservation International News release](#) (pdf)

The U.S. Forest Service's Eastern Region is funding projects with



Healthy Virginia big-eared bat in Hellhole, Pendleton County, WV. Credit: Jeff Hajenga/WVDNR

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\$150,000 set aside for WNS work. The money will go toward acoustic surveys, relocating bat roosts and installing a bat-friendly gate at the entrance to an Illinois cave. [MORE](#) (pdf)

The Service has awarded Arkansas Game and Fish Commission a multi-state grant of \$998,834 on behalf of itself and eight more states for WNS response. State partners include Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Bat Conservation International will be a partner. Projects include surveying and monitoring and developing response strategies. The non-federal match is \$450,797. [News release](#)

Reflecting the unfortunate spread of white-nose syndrome beyond the Service's Northeast Region, we have replaced the old URL with a new one: <http://www.fws.gov/WhiteNoseSyndrome>. Visitors to the old URL will automatically be redirected to the new URL.

The Department of Natural Resources has closed Missouri state park caves to protect against WNS. The closed caves are considered wild caves used by bats and are closed to help prevent the spread of the disease by humans carrying fungal spores associated with WNS on their clothing and gear. WNS is likely in Pike and Shannon counties where the fungus has been found. Four other caves are considered low risk to bats and will remain open.

[News Release](#)

Tennessee has confirmed three more cases of WNS in caves in Carter, Fentress, and VanBuren counties. [News release](#). In addition, New Hampshire has confirmed WNS in Coos County, and Delaware has identified WNS as likely in a summer maternity colony in New Castle County.

Research is vitally important to our understanding of WNS and finding the key to stopping it. This list includes many of the [past and current research projects](#) funded by many agencies and organizations. [See also Research and monitoring.](#)

The Service will award up to \$2 million in grants for high-priority research projects on WNS. The intent is to fund research within three broad topics: timing and dynamics of the fungus associated with WNS; persistence of the fungus on bats or in the environment; and susceptibility of bat species, including migrating and European bats, to the fungus. The deadline for requests for proposals has been extended to June 14. Grants will be awarded in the autumn. Funding requests must be between \$50,000 and \$750,000, and projects must be completed by Sept. 30, 2012. \$1 million of the available funding comes from a special congressional appropriation for WNS work. Up to \$1 million more comes from a Service fund called

Preventing Extinction. For further information see <http://www.grants.gov>, "Find Grant Opportunities" and search by Keyword: white-nose or FON: FWS-R5-ES-10-049 or CFDA: 15.657.

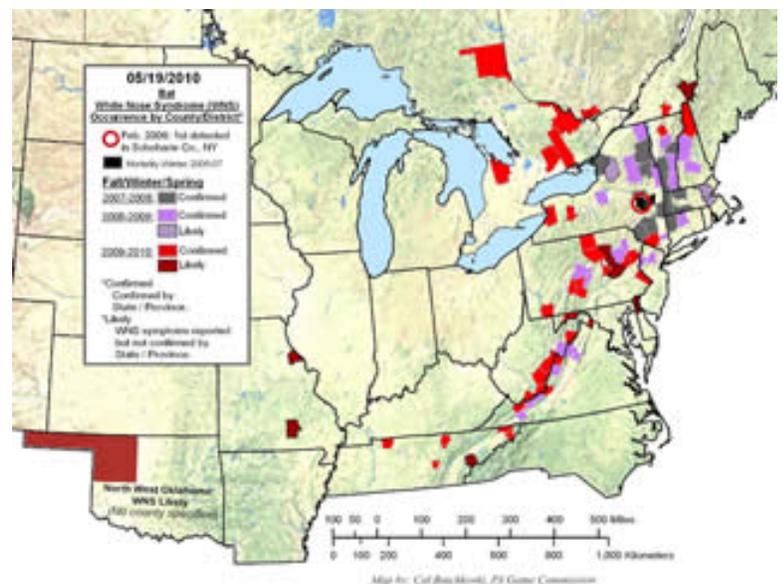
The Service is awarding a total of \$450,000 in grants to assist state natural resource agencies with their work on WNS. The money comes from a special \$1.9 million congressional appropriation. \$1 million of the appropriation will go to research grants (a request for proposals will be announced soon), and \$450,000 will support Service coordination and management of the WNS response. [News release](#)

In 2009, the Service authorized the Smithsonian National Zoo's Conservation Biology Institute near Front Royal, Va., to begin an experiment to maintain endangered Virginia big-eared bats in captivity. The Service believes such an experiment is needed to help us understand captive techniques given the rapidly spreading white-nose syndrome crisis. In light of high mortality in this captive population, the Service conducted an onsite evaluation of SCBI's practices. A team of federal and state biologists and a Service veterinarian carried out a detailed examination of SCBI's efforts to determine if the zoo is in compliance with a Service permit to hold these endangered bats. The team found that SCBI is meeting the criteria for their permit and it is best for the surviving bats to remain at the facility. The Service acknowledges some criticism continues on how this experiment is being conducted, and is dedicated to keeping the remaining captive bats alive while learning as much as possible from this experience. Given that many eastern bat populations are declining dramatically due to white-nose syndrome, the Service will continue working with other scientists to explore the feasibility of captive propagation techniques. [More information](#)

Archived activities and news

What is white-nose syndrome?

In February 2006 some 40 miles west of Albany, N.Y., a caver photographed hibernating bats with an unusual white substance on their muzzles. He noticed several dead



Map of white-nose syndrome by county/district as of 05/19/2010.

bats. The following winter, bats behaving erratically, bats with white noses, and a few hundred dead bats in several caves came to the attention of New York Department of Environmental Conservation biologists, who documented white-nose syndrome in January 2007. More than a million hibernating bats have died since. Biologists with state and federal agencies and organizations across the country are still trying to find the answer to this deadly mystery.

We have found sick, dying and dead bats in unprecedented numbers in and around caves and mines from New Hampshire to Tennessee. In some hibernacula, 90 to 100 percent of the bats are dying.

Click the map for full-size version.
Courtesy of Cal Butchkoski, PA Game Commission.

[More maps](#)

While they are in the hibernacula, affected bats often have white fungus on their muzzles and other parts of their bodies. They may have low body fat. These bats often move to cold parts of the hibernacula, fly during the day and during cold winter weather when the insects they feed upon are not available, and exhibit other uncharacteristic behavior.

Despite the continuing search to find the source of this condition by numerous laboratories and state and federal biologists, the cause of the bat deaths remains unknown. A newly discovered cold-loving fungus, *Geomyces destructans*, invades the skin of bats. Scientists are exploring how the fungus acts and searching



for a way to stop
it.

**Learn more
about white-
nose syndrome**

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