



NFWF

# Bats for the Future Fund

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## FUNDING PARTNERS

- Avangrid Foundation
- Shell
- Southern Company
- USDA Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores our nation's fish and wildlife and their habitats. Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private funds.

Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Tri-colored bat | Credit: Pete Pattavina, USFWS

## BACKGROUND

Bats play a critical role in the United States controlling agricultural, forest and human pests. Recent studies estimate the pesticide services of bats are worth more than \$1 billion a year to the United States corn industry alone, and over \$3 billion per year to all agricultural production.

Unfortunately, more than 6 million bats have died over the past decade from a disease called white-nose syndrome (WNS), with even further population declines anticipated in the coming years. In some sites where WNS has been detected, up to 100 percent of bats have been killed. Since signs of the disease were first observed in New York in 2006, WNS has spread rapidly from the Northeast to the Midwest, Southeast, Pacific Northwest, and Canada, with cases confirmed in 34 U.S. states and 7 Canadian provinces to-date.

WNS is caused by a cold-loving fungal pathogen, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, that attacks hibernating bat species and causes premature arousal and death. More than half of the bat species in the United States and Canada hibernate to survive the winter and are potentially susceptible. Without adequate management tools and treatments to solve this devastating problem, several bat species may be in danger of extinction.

In the United States and Canada, a collaboration among federal and state agencies, tribes, and academic, environmental and non-governmental organizations has come together to slow or halt the spread of WNS in North America, and promote the survival and recovery of WNS-affected bat populations and species. The work of this collaboration has brought the response to WNS to an exciting point, where scientists are testing treatments and innovative management solutions to overcome the disease, and help affected bat populations recover.

(continued)



Healthy little brown bats in Vermont.  
| Credit: Ann Froschauer/USFWS

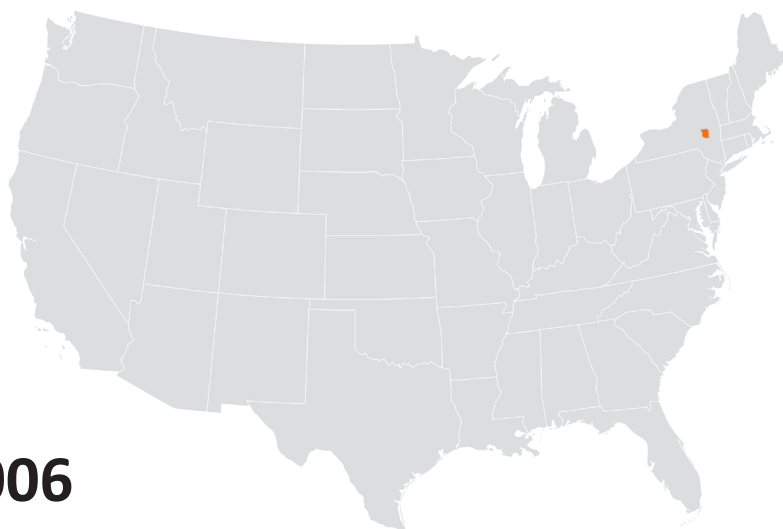
The Bats for the Future Fund (BFF) pools public and private dollars to promote the survival and recovery of WNS-affected bats in North America. Major funding for the BFF Fund is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additional funding is provided by the U.S. Forest Service, the Avangrid Foundation and Southern Company. The BFF Fund awards grants annually to develop innovative tools to slow the spread of white-nose syndrome, and speed the recovery of surviving bat populations. The USFWS, which leads the national response for combatting WNS, provided the seed funding for the BFF Fund.

The BFF Fund focuses grant funding on existing and novel disease treatments and management strategies urgently needed to stem the impacts of WNS at the leading edge of the disease, areas with a mosaic of contaminated and uncontaminated sites on the front line of the fungus' invasion. This includes areas where WNS is currently causing the greatest bat population declines such as the Midwest.

By investing funding to treatments and new management strategies for WNS, the BFF Fund gives hope that we can defeat this devastating disease.

## REGIONS WITH WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME-CAUSING FUNGUS

**2006**



**2011**



**2019**

