



Bats for the Future Fund

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FUNDING PARTNERS

- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Southern Company
- NextEra Energy Resources
- Avangrid Foundation

ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 6,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$8.1 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Tri-colored bat

BACKGROUND

Bats play a critical role in the United States by controlling insect pests that can degrade agricultural operation, forest health and quality of life. 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 \$3.7 billion per year to all agricultural production. Millions of bats have died over the past two decades from a disease called white-nose syndrome (WNS), with even further population declines anticipated in the coming years, with cases confirmed in 40 states and eight Canadian provinces.

WNS is caused by a cold-loving fungal pathogen, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd), that attacks hibernating bat species and causes premature arousal and death. In some sites where WNS has been detected, up to 100 percent of bats have been killed. The Bats for the Future Fund was established in 2017 to pool public and private dollars to promote the survival and recovery of WNS-affected bats in North America.

From 2017 through 2023, more than \$5 million has been awarded through 25 grants, with grantees providing more than \$3.5 million in matching funds for a total conservation impact of more than \$8.5 million. These grants have tested multiple strategies, including the use of UV light, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and polyethylene glycol to kill Pd, and enhancing insect foraging opportunities for bats to build fat reserves before and after hibernation.

The Bats for the Future Fund (BFF) awards up to \$1 million in grants each year. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which leads the national response for combating WNS, provides major funding for the BFF. Additional important funding is provided by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Southern Company, NextEra Energy Resources and Avangrid Foundation.

(continued)



Big brown bat

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Advance field treatments and management tools that provide the greatest potential to improve survival of bats by preventing exposure of bats to *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd), the fungal pathogen that causes WNS, and/or enhancing bats' ability to withstand the disease
- Implement field treatments, management tools and conservation strategies that help WNS-affected bat populations to recover from the impacts of WNS
- Support innovative and collaborative research leading directly to development and deployment of treatments and management tools or strategies for WNS that will perpetuate viable populations of bats

The program has an epidemiological focus on three areas as it relates to the status of Pd and WNS:

- Areas where Pd has not been detected and is unlikely to already be present
- On the leading edge of WNS, and/or in the vicinity of where Pd fungal pathogen has been detected and bats may be affected
- In the established or endemic area, where Pd and WNS have caused significant mortality and all hibernacula are assumed to be impacted

STATES AND PROVINCES: WNS IS CONFIRMED AND/OR POSITIVE FOR PD

