Bats for the Future Fund

NFWF CONTACT

Amanda Bassow
Regional Director,
Northeastern Regional Office
amanda.bassow@nfwf.org
202-857-0166

John Wright
Senior Program Manager,
Northeastern Regional Office
john.wright@nfwf.org
202-595-2478

Ragan Smith
Coordinator,
Regional Programs
ragan.smith@nfwf.org
202-938-0625

FUNDING PARTNERS

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- NextEra Energy Resources
- Southern Company

ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) works with partners to foster sustainable and impactful conservation solutions so that people and nature thrive together. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest conservation foundation. Since its founding, NFWF has funded more than 23,300 projects that have generated a total conservation impact of $11.3 billion.

Learn more at **www.nfwf.org**

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
1625 Eye Street, NW
Suite 300
Washington, D.C., 20006
202-857-0166

Tricolored bat

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced the 2025 Bats for the Future Fund (BFF) grant recipients. The BFF is a collaborative partnership between NFWF and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with additional important funding provided by NextEra Energy Resources, through its charitable arm, the NextEra Energy Foundation, and Southern Company. Two new grants totaling $401,800 were awarded to slow the impact of white-nose syndrome on bat populations. The two awards announced generated nearly $105,000 in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of $506,800.

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 WNS, with even further population declines anticipated in the coming years, with cases confirmed in 40 states and nine 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 2025, more than $5.6 million has been awarded through 29 grants, with grantees providing more than $3 million in matching funds for a total conservation impact of more than $8 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.

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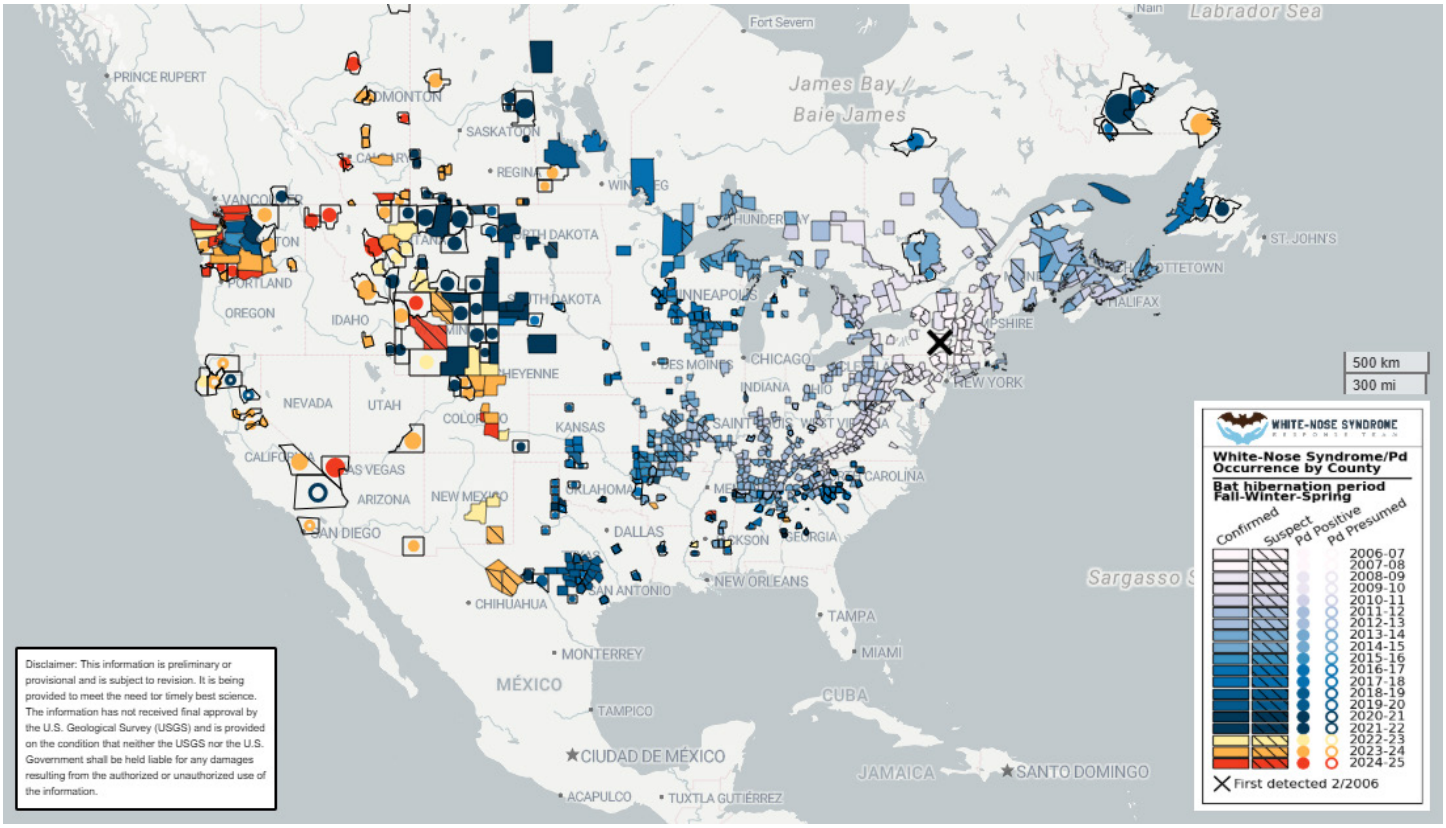

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Advance field treatments and management tools that provide the greatest potential to improve survival of bats by preventing exposure of bats to 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 the deployment of treatments and management for WNS and WNS-affected species

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

2025 GRANTS

Understanding Winter Bat Migration Temperature Response to Inform Best Management Practices (MI)

Grantee: Michigan Technological University
Grant Amount:.....$189,400
Matching Funds:.....$20,700
Total Project Amount:.....$210,100

Quantify winter movement of little brown bats in northern Michigan to determine the effect of cooling on the prevalence of the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome. Project will deploy tags and autonomous readers to track bats and their movement networks, informing best practice recommendations for thermal maintenance in managed habitats.

Assessing Pathogen Response to Temperature Change to Inform White-Nose Syndrome Treatment (NY, WI)

Grantee: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Grant Amount:.....$212,400
Matching Funds:.....$84,300
Total Project Amount:.....$296,700

Evaluate the relationship between temperature and decay of the fungal pathogen that causes white-nose syndrome to inform best management practices for bat habitat. Project will monitor 25 sites in New York and Wisconsin to improve understanding of the pathogen's temperature sensitivity, enabling the development and refinement of best management practices for bat population recovery.