

Something is killing our bats: The white–nose syndrome mystery

Your help needed to protect hibernating bats

Hibernating bats in New York and Vermont, including endangered Indiana bats that are also found in North Carolina, are dying at an alarming rate, and we don't know why. The dead bats are apparently infected by a fungus, which often forms white tufts on the bats' muzzles, giving the name white nose syndrome, or WNS. In addition to the white muzzle, dead bats appear to have used up their winter fat stores and have congregated much closer to cave entrances than usual. Researchers are trying to determine if the fungus itself is responsible for the deaths or if its presence is symptomatic of another problem.

We ask your help with this situation by following caving guidelines developed to help reduce the risk of spreading contamination. For more information on WNS and guidelines to prevent its spread, visit the WNS web pages of either the Northeast

(http://www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html) or Midwest

(<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/mammals/inba/BatAilment.html>) region.