



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
3000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3000

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MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
(ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH)
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
(ENVIRONMENT)
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
(ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH)

SUBJECT: Interim Policy on Management of White Nose Syndrome in Bats

White-nose Syndrome (WNS) is a disease associated with the *Geomyces destructans* fungus that is rapidly spreading south and west across North America and causing unprecedented mortality of hibernating bats in the United States. As it spreads, the challenges for understanding and managing the disease continue to increase. Although WNS affects bats during hibernation, the effects extend well outside the cave and onto the summer maternity range. Thus, the effects from WNS-associated mortality may be observed across the landscape.

It is incumbent on DoD to manage its natural resources to ensure no net loss to readiness. Similarly, DoD activities must comply with legal requirements to protect listed bat species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Bats perform vital ecological services, such as eating nocturnal insects. WNS threatens the recovery of federally listed bat species populations and may hasten the listing of additional bat species, thereby posing a direct threat to mission readiness. All nine threatened and endangered bat species in the U.S., including the Indiana and gray bats, can occur on or near DoD military installations. The Indiana bat hibernates in many WNS positive sites, and the endangered gray bat recently tested positive for the fungus that causes WNS, postponing the possible delisting of this species with potential long-term consequences for DoD.

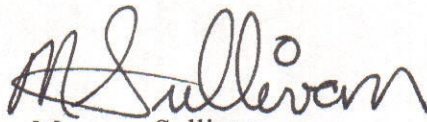
Research indicates that WNS may be transmitted in two ways: bat-to-bat transmission is believed to be the primary route, and circumstantial evidence suggests humans may inadvertently carry WNS from site-to-site. Should WNS spread to caves located on military installations, these caves, along with surrounding areas, may become access-restricted, which could significantly reduce the number of caves available for training. It is imperative that installations develop strategies to mitigate potential military mission impacts.

All military installations and ranges with known populations of bats shall implement, to the extent feasible and when appropriate, strategies to help combat the spread of WNS. Specifically, affected military installations shall:

- Incorporate WNS management strategies into installation Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans, including strategies to identify, avoid, and mitigate effects prior to the arrival of WNS.

- Ensure procedures are in place to guarantee the cleaning and sanitization of any clothing and equipment that may have come in contact with the *Geomyces destructans* fungus.
- Ensure surveillance procedures are in place to monitor bats for any new or expanding occurrences of WNS.
- Consider the recommendations in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's *National Plan for Assisting States, Federal Agencies and Tribes in Managing WNS in Bats*, as appropriate.
- Work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and other related agencies regarding WNS reporting and the management of caves, mines, and other affected sites.
- Share up-to-date information with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state fish and wildlife agencies.

My point of contact is Mr. Peter Boice, who can be reached at 703-604-0524.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a distinct "Sullivan" following.

Maureen Sullivan

Director, Environmental Management
Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
(Installations and Environment)