

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL BAT WEEK  
October 24-31, 2016

By the Secretary of the Interior of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS bats are vital to the sustainability of natural ecosystems, national economies, and human health by controlling damaging insect pests, pollinating plants including fruits and vegetables, and dispersing seeds to ensure healthy functioning ecosystems; and research suggests that bats could save agriculture more than \$3 billion in pest control every year; and

WHEREAS white-nose syndrome, a deadly fungus that has killed millions of bats throughout eastern North America, was found in the State of Washington this year and is a threat to the sustainability of bat populations; and

WHEREAS the Department of the Interior's (Department) participation through four Bureaus—the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management—is leading the international response to the disease for the Nation in partnership with other Federal agencies, states, non-governmental organizations, and universities; and

WHEREAS the Department, on behalf of the United States Government, has entered into an agreement with the governments of Mexico and Canada to strengthen cooperation, coordination, and information-sharing related to the conservation and management of all bat species throughout North America; and

WHEREAS the Department has invested more than \$25 million in Federal funds to develop research, inventory, and monitoring of bat populations, potential treatment methods, decontamination protocols, and other mechanisms to understand and address this deadly disease; and

WHEREAS it is critically important to expand Federal efforts to take new steps, including the development of new public-private partnerships and increased citizen engagement; to promote the health of bat populations, increase our understanding of bats through research and monitoring; to promote the quality and amount of bat roosting and foraging habitat; and to help restore bat populations to healthy levels; and

WHEREAS bats have captured the human imagination through folklore, myths, and legends, and outreach and education efforts about the importance of bats are instrumental to their recovery;

NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of the vital significance of protecting the health of bat populations, I, Sally Jewell, Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, do hereby proclaim October 24-31, 2016, as National Bat Week at the Department. I call upon the American public to join us in recognizing the importance of bats and the stewardship role the Department plays in providing valuable habitat for bats, research, and recovery actions throughout the Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 21 day of October 2016, the two-hundred forty-first year of the Independence of the United States of America.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sally Jewell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S" and a distinct "J" for "Jewell".

Secretary of the Interior