

News Release



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Fish and Wildlife Service Awards \$1.6 Million in Grants to Research and Manage the Spread of White-Nose Syndrome

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced six grant awards totaling approximately \$1.6 million to investigate the cause of white-nose syndrome (WNS) in bats and to identify ways to manage it. White-nose syndrome has killed more than a million bats in eastern North America and has spread rapidly across the United States and into Canada since its discovery in 2007.

“Bats are essential components of our nation’s ecosystem,” said Acting Service Director Rowan Gould. “These grants provide critical funding to help the Service and our partners understand white-nose syndrome and address this unprecedented wildlife crisis.”

The Service is leading a cooperative effort with federal and state agencies, researchers, universities and other non-government organizations to research and manage the spread of WNS. Grants were provided through the Preventing Extinction program and a congressional appropriation for WNS work. The Service selected recipients from among 36 grant proposals totaling almost \$10.6 million.

“I am pleased that the Service is able to continue to fund research that is critical to the management of white-nose syndrome,” says Jeremy Coleman, Ph.D., the Service’s national white-nose syndrome coordinator. “These projects will help us answer critical questions about how to manage this devastating disease.”

Funded projects include detailed studies of *Geomyces destructans*, the fungus associated with WNS; improving WNS detection techniques; developing a better understanding of how WNS is transmitted; determining the mechanics of *G. destructans* infections in bats, including the susceptibility and resistance of bats to the infection; and determining how persistent the fungus is in the environment.

The *G. destructans* fungus has been detected from Canada south to Tennessee and as far west as Oklahoma, and it is expected to continue to spread. Four endangered species and subspecies of bats in the United States are already affected by or are at risk from WNS. The Endangered Species Act protects six bat species in the contiguous United States.

Additional information about WNS may be found at <http://www.fws.gov/whitenosesyndrome/>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and a trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information about our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov>.

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