



Bats for the Future Fund

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FUNDING PARTNERS

Major funding for the Bats for the Future Fund is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Funding is also provided by the U.S. Forest Service.



ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores our nation's fish and wildlife and their habitats. Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private funds.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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A cluster of healthy, hibernating Virginia big-eared bats in West Virginia | Credit: Jeff Hajenga, WVDNR

BACKGROUND

Bats play important roles in the U.S. controlling agricultural, forest, and human pests. Recent studies estimate the pesticide services of bats are worth more than \$1 billion a year to the U.S. corn industry alone, and over \$3 billion per year to all agricultural production.

Unfortunately, more than 6 million bats have died over the past decade from a disease called white-nose syndrome (WNS). In some sites, 90 to 100 percent of bats have disappeared. Since signs of the disease were first observed in New York in 2006, WNS has spread rapidly from the Northeast to the Midwest, Southeast and eastern Canada, and in the spring of 2016 was found in Washington state.

The disease is caused by a cold-loving fungus that attacks hibernating bats. More than half of the bat species in the United States and Canada hibernate to survive the winter and are potentially susceptible. Without a solution to this devastating problem, several bat species may be in danger of extinction.

In the U.S. and Canada, a collaboration among federal and state agencies, tribes, and academic, environmental, and non-governmental organizations has come together to fight WNS, and help bats recover. The work of this collaboration has brought the response to WNS to an exciting place where scientists are testing treatments to overcome the disease.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) are launching the Bats for the Future (BFF) Fund, which will pool public and

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Healthy little brown bats in Vermont.
| Credit: Ann Froschauer/USFWS

private dollars to promote survival of bats in North America. The BFF Fund will award grants annually to develop innovative tools to slow the spread of white-nose syndrome, and speed the recovery of surviving bat populations. The USFWS, which leads the national response for combatting WNS, is providing the seed funding for the BFF Fund. Additional funding is being provided by the U.S. Forest Service.

The BFF Fund will focus grant funding on existing and novel disease treatments urgently needed to stem impacts of WNS at the leading edge of the disease, areas with a mosaic of contaminated and uncontaminated sites on the front line of the fungus' invasion. This includes areas where WNS is currently causing the greatest bat population declines such as the Midwest.

By investing funding to treatments and new approaches to managing WNS, the BFF Fund gives hope that we can defeat this devastating disease.



COUNTIES WITH WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME-CAUSING FUNGUS