

USDA Forest Service Wayne National Forest Agency Update



Katrina Schultes
Forest Wildlife Biologist
21 January 2025

Agency Update

- Hibernaculum census
- Fall swarming surveys at abandoned mines
- NABat acoustic monitoring
- Programmatic Bat Conservation Strategy



The background of the slide is a photograph of a cave entrance. The cave is a dark opening in a light-colored rock face. A wooden gate, made of horizontal slats, is closed across the entrance. The surrounding area is a forest with many bare trees and a ground covered in fallen brown leaves. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

Indiana Bat Hibernaculum Census

Lawrence County Mine Ironton Ranger District

■ 6 February 2024 mid-winter count



Lawrence Co. Mine

Comparison post-WNS mid-winter censuses with the pre-WNS average (2007-2011)

Species	Pre-WNS average	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
MYLU (Little Brown)	951	4	0	0	0	0	0
MYSO (Indiana)	251	0	0	0	0	0	0
PESU (Tri-color/Pip)	121	4	2	0	1	0	2
EPFU (Big Brown)	4	1	3	4	5	4	2
MYSE (Northern)	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total:	1333	9	5	4	6	4	4

Lawrence Co. Mine

2024 mid-winter census

Mid-winter Count	Pre-WNS		Post-WNS
	Average		
Species	2007-2011	2024	% Change
MYLU (Little Brown)	951	0	-100%
MYSO (Indiana)	251	0	-100%
PESU (Tri-color/Pip)	121	2	-98%
EPFU (Big Brown)	4	2	-50%
MYSE (Northern)	5	0	-100.0%
Unidentified	1	0	
Total	1333	4	-99.7%

Fall Swarming Surveys

- Long-term monitoring points at 10 abandoned mine openings with additional data from a couple of other mine sites
- Many sites were busy pre-WNS swarming sites with capture rates above 10 bats per hour
- In 2011, restricted to observation-only surveys (no captures)
- By 2017, only seeing zero to 2 bats swarming
- 2023 & 2024 allowed to capture bats again

Fall Swarming Capture Results 2023 & 2024

Sites	2023	2024	Notes
Brush Fork Subsidence-1 (281) WASB050	0	-	
Brush Fork Subsidence-2 (283) WASB052	0	-	
Burr Oak (WAPR1352)	-	1	1 NLEB
Elm Rock Rd (WAPR1180)	2	-	1 TCB, 1 unk
Goose Run-1 (WAPR1114)	0	-	
Goose Run-2 (WAPR1112)	0	-	
Gore-Greendale-4005 (WAPR1068)	0	-	
Lost Run -3019 (WAPR1633)	-	0	
Monkey Hollow-21 (WASB0144) (WASB049-collapsed)	-	0	Now only 1 opening
Monkey Hollow-1010C (WAPR0371-collapsed)	-	0	new vertical opening
New Straitsville South-1035 (Area D) (WAPR1523)	-	1	1 unk
Snake Hollow-19 & 20 (WAPR0604 & WAPR0605)	-	0	side-by-side openings
Total swarming bats captured or observed:	2	2	
Total sites surveyed:	6	6	

Surveys lasted approximately 4 hours during suitable weather; “-” no survey performed.



NABat Acoustic Monitoring

- 1 GRTS cell (Athens Units) with 4 stationary detectors and driving transect run 2x
 - Sampled annually since 2018
- 1 GRTS cell (Marietta Unit) with 1 driving transect run 2x
 - Sampled annually since 2021 for Div of WL

Bat Conservation Strategy (BCS) for Forest Service-Managed Lands of the Eastern United States

- A proactive bat conservation strategy for coordination between the FS and FWS for ongoing implementation of the 34 different Forest Plans involved to cover four bat species: Indiana, Northern long-eared, tricolored, and little brown bats
- Purpose: provide relevant scientific information and management considerations to FS land managers in Regions 8 and 9 for planning and implementing activities
- Now includes a two-tiered ESA consultation process



BCS Goals

- Contribute to the conservation and recovery effort of BCS species across FS Regions 8 and 9 at the landscape scale through a consistent approach to project design and program delivery.
- Minimize negative impacts to BCS species on National Forest System lands across the eastern United States.
- Foster a landscape that promotes habitat resilience to potential ecosystem threats (such as but not limited to climate change, mesophication, and invasive species) and potentially supports long-term recovery of BCS species.
- Protect remaining known bats by protecting and improving habitat conditions in and adjacent to known hibernacula.
- Protect remaining known bat populations by protecting and improving habitat conditions around known maternal roost colonies.



Forest Wildlife Biologist,

Wayne National Forest

Katrina.Schultes@usda.gov

740-753-0901