



NFWF

Bats for the Future Fund

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FUNDING PARTNERS

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- NextEra Energy Resources
- Southern Company

ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 6,800 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of more than \$10 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org

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OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced a 2024-year round of funding for Bats for the Future Fund projects, with additional funds provided by NextEra Energy Resources, through its charitable arm, the NextEra Energy Foundation, and Southern Company. Two new grants to slow the impact of white-nose syndrome (WNS) on bat populations, totaling \$384,600, were awarded. The two awards announced leveraged \$242,500 in match from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$627,100.

Bats play a critical role in the United States by controlling insect pests that can degrade agricultural operation, forest health and quality of life. Recent studies estimate the pesticide services of bats are worth more than \$1 billion a year to the United States corn industry alone, and over \$3.7 billion per year to all agricultural production. Millions of bats have died over the past two decades from WNS, with even further population declines anticipated in the coming years, with cases confirmed in 40 states and nine Canadian provinces.

WNS is caused by a cold-loving fungal pathogen, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd), that attacks hibernating bat species and causes premature arousal and death. In some sites where WNS has been detected, up to 100 percent of bats have been killed. The Bats for the Future Fund was established in 2017 to pool public and private dollars to promote the survival and recovery of WNS-affected bats in North America.

From 2017 through 2024, more than \$5.2 million has been awarded through 27 grants, with grantees providing more than \$3.7 million in matching funds for a total conservation impact of more than \$9 million. These grants have tested multiple strategies, including the use of UV light, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and polyethylene glycol to kill Pd, and enhancing insect foraging opportunities for bats to build fat reserves before and after hibernation.

The Bats for the Future Fund (BFF) awards up to \$1 million in grants each year. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which leads the national response for combating WNS, provides major funding for the BFF. Additional important funding is provided by NextEra Energy Resources and Southern Company.



Tricolored bat

(continued)



Big brown bat

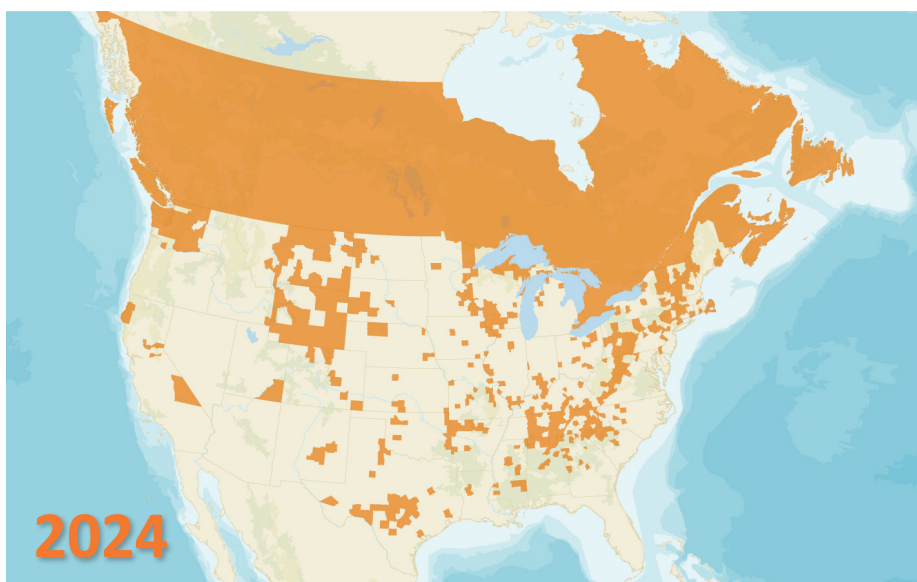
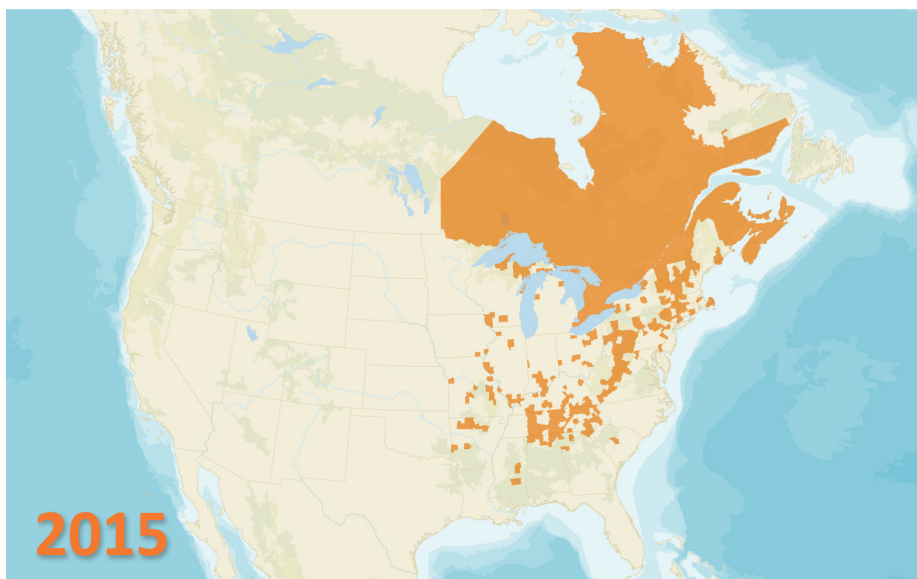
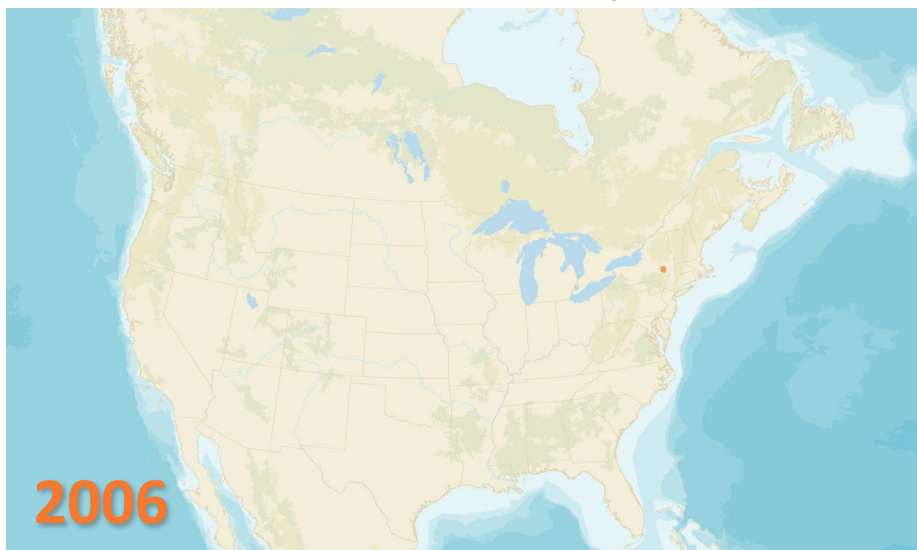
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Advance field treatments and management tools that provide the greatest potential to improve survival of bats by preventing exposure of bats to Pd, the fungal pathogen that causes WNS, and/or enhancing bats' ability to withstand the disease
- Implement field treatments, management tools and conservation strategies that help WNS-affected bat populations to recover from the impacts of WNS
- Support innovative and collaborative research leading directly to the deployment of treatments and management for WNS and WNS-affected species

The program has an epidemiological focus on three areas as it relates to the status of Pd and WNS:

- Areas where Pd has not been detected and is unlikely to already be present
- On the leading edge of WNS, and/or in the vicinity of where Pd fungal pathogen has been detected and bats may be affected
- In the established or endemic area, where Pd and WNS have caused significant mortality and all hibernacula are assumed to be impacted

STATES AND PROVINCES: WNS IS CONFIRMED AND/OR POSITIVE FOR PD



(continued)



Swabbing bats for Pd | Credit: Maarten Vonhof

2024 GRANTS

Preemptive Vaccine Pilot and Habitat Advancement for Bats in Glacier National Park (MT)

Grantee: National Park Service - Glacier National Park
 Grant Amount:.....\$133,900
 Matching Funds:.....\$119,900
 Total Project Amount:.....\$253,800

Pilot a vaccination program in Glacier National Park and evaluate survival rates of little brown bats to preemptively protect populations against WNS. Project will vaccinate and tag over 300 bats, construct new bat box habitat, and assess the impacts of these activities to inform efforts to combat WNS on a larger scale.

Using Ultraviolet Light Sanitization to Reduce WNS Presence (CT, MI, MN, NJ, NY, VT)

Grantee: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
 Grant Amount:.....\$250,700
 Matching Funds:.....\$122,600
 Total Project Amount:.....\$373,300

Implement UV light treatment at bat hibernation sites to mitigate the impacts of WNS on affected bats. Project will make immediate impacts to WNS-affected bat populations by implementing sanitization in hibernation sites and refine UV sanitization protocols to make them broadly applicable for widescale disease management.