



# White-nose Syndrome Bulletin

## For Federal and State Personnel

Issue 1: June 2009

### Purpose of the Newsletter

Greetings! This newsletter was developed with the intent to: 1. Keep those entities directly involved with the White-nose Syndrome (WNS) investigation current with the latest developing information; 2. To have a source where consistent information is given to all parties simultaneously; 3. To provide task groups updates or other ongoing scientific research; 4. To provide advisory and outreach updates, as well as other general information; and 5. To announce important dates to remember such as deadlines, meetings, conferences, etc. In no way is this newsletter confined to the five purposes listed above...ANY pertinent information regarding the WNS investigation will be published on a monthly basis. If you have news/updates to share please send to Noelle Rayman, Assistant White-nose Syndrome Coordinator, Region 5, New York Field Office, [noelle\\_rayman@fws.gov](mailto:noelle_rayman@fws.gov).

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### FY09 Preventing Extinction RFP

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is now accepting proposals to fund research that focuses on the investigation and management of WNS. Priority research includes finding the cause of WNS, determining how WNS is transmitted, determining treatment strategies, monitoring and surveillance strategies, containment strategies, rapid assessment protocols, susceptibility, captive propagation, captive management/rehabilitation, and the effects of WNS on bat populations. Projects should assist the USFWS to conserve Federally-listed bats such as the Indiana, Virginia big-eared, and gray bats, but non-listed species can

also be used for research. The deadline to submit proposals is July 31, 2009. A link to the RFP can be found on the main page of the Region 5 WNS website: [http://www.fws.gov/northeast/white\\_nose.html](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html)

### The Fungus – *Geomyces destructans*

The previously undescribed fungus that is associated with mass mortality in hibernating bats has now been named *Geomyces destructans*. The article, published in the April-June 2009 edition of the journal *Mycotoxin* by A. Gargas, M.T. Trest, M.Christensen, T.J. Volk and D.S. Blehert, can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/wnsfungus.html>

### State Updates

**Virginia** – Rick Reynolds (VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries) reported on June 2 that another WNS suspect county was found. “We had a report of WNS symptoms in a cave (Hancock Cave) in Smyth County. Carol Zokitas and I went to the site on 21 May and collected three specimens that were sent to USGS (Madison, WI). All three were pipistrelles (tri-colored bats) and all had the classic white nose fungus (plus). We observed approximately 20-25 pips in the two rooms we visited, but it was hard to determine how many had the fungus due to position on the ceiling. No dead bats were observed. We did find a single VA big-eared bat

in the passage between the two rooms we surveyed. This bat did not show signs of WNS, but we did not handle the bat as we had already handled several pips. This location now puts us in gray bat territory; there is a large bachelor colony (about 2,000 individuals) approximately 9 miles south of Hancock Cave. This site is also approximately 25 miles north of the North Carolina and Tennessee borders.”

**West Virginia** – Craig Stihler (WV Department of Natural Resources) reported that maternity colony censuses were complete for Virginia big-eared bats (VBEB). Nine of 10 caves surveyed had an increase in the number of bats present. Four caves recorded the highest number ever of VBEB. Numbers increased from 2008 between 20 and 271 bats per cave.

**Current distribution map of WNS affected states:** [http://www.fws.gov/northeast/graphics/WNS\\_Mapping\\_06-05-09\\_DS.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/graphics/WNS_Mapping_06-05-09_DS.pdf)

### Federal Updates

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Region 4** – Bill Gates (Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Alabama) reports that Region 4 has developed a WNS summary for internal distribution. The purpose is to keep staff informed of important current happenings so large numbers of email and related materials do not have to be read and distributed. Update #1 went out the week of June 15. Future summaries will be sent out once every two weeks. Staff involved in summary development have received positive comments on the idea and Update #1. Update #2 was sent out the week of June 30.

Bill Gates also reports that a meeting of interested individuals from state and federal agencies is planned for July 1 to discuss if a WNS response plan is needed for Alabama. At a minimum, staff from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, USFS, and USFWS

(Ecological Services and Refuges) are likely to attend. The Kentucky and Tennessee response Plans, as well as information regarding proposed summer monitoring, have been sent to attendees to prepare for the meeting.

**U.S. Forest Service, Region 6** – Pat Ormsbee (Williamette National Forest, Oregon) reports that the Western Bat Working Group (WBWG) sent out a letter to all western state and provincial Wildlife Department Directors stressing the importance of addressing and raising the awareness of WNS in the west. Attached was the WBWG protocol for decontamination and a WNS informational brochure. Several states and provinces have already adopted the protocol as a requirement for securing scientific permits.

**Task/Working Group Updates Structured Decision Making (SDM) Working Group** – submitted by Robyn Niver. To start the SDM process, a meeting was held May 11-13, 2009, at the USFWS National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV. The workshop goals were to: (1) elicit the objectives of decision makers (USFWS and State Directors) via their proxies, and (2) develop a prototype of the entire SDM framework to garner insights on how to proceed with the decision analysis. Participants included representatives from USFWS Regions 3, 4, and 5, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), National Park Service (NPS), and the state wildlife agencies in Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Indiana, Kentucky, and Wisconsin. We established an analytical approach for our decision problem, elicited objectives, and completed a mock run-through of the entire decision analysis.

**Analytical framework** – The dynamics of WNS differ over space, and the appropriate management strategies may differ over space as well. We defined three geographic areas that differ significantly in terms of disease

dynamics. These areas are:

**Area 1 (Epicenter):** In this area, many of the bats in sites have already become infected and the spread of the disease has largely stabilized. This includes New York and New England, possibly extending south and east to the northeast corner of Pennsylvania.

**Area 2 (Leading Edge):** At the leading edge of the disease, there is very active conversion of sites from a susceptible stage to an infected stage. Portions of Area 2 include a mosaic of uninfected and infected caves (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, Virginia). Other portions of Area 2 have no known infection, but are so close to known-affected sites that there is potential that some sites may already be affected (but bats are not yet symptomatic or the symptoms have not yet been documented) or will likely be affected next winter (Maryland, Delaware, eastern Ohio, and eastern Kentucky).

**Area 3 (Susceptible):** In this area, all of the sites are, to date, uninfected, but there is a looming chance of infection in the near future. We defined this area as being >250 miles from the nearest site of infection.

Given the need for management recommendations by September 2009, we decided to proceed with the SDM process and develop a prototype framework for the area of highest priority. This framework will be further refined over the summer. The group felt that preventing infection from spreading into Area 3 is the critical management focus at this time, however, we will also move forward with Areas 1 and 2.

Next steps include finalizing objectives and developing a comprehensive list of alternatives that may be applied at various sites this winter. We will then

request input from a variety of experts regarding the potential consequences of selecting a given alternative. We will conduct a trade-off analysis among the alternatives and a sensitivity analysis to help understand what aspects of the decision are most sensitive to uncertainty (will help focus research). The goal is to have a framework available for resource managers in Area 3 to use this fall.

### Conference and Meeting Updates

**Congressional Hearings** – WNS testimony was given by Marvin Moriarty (USFWS Region 5 Regional Director), Joel Holtrop (NPS), Merlin Tuttle (Bat Conservation International, BCI), Scott Darling (Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department), Peter Youngbaer (National Speleological Society WNS liaison), and Tom Kunz (Boston University) at: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/wnsaudiovideo.html>

**NIMBioS Web Conference** – The USFWS Region 5 New York Field Office (NYFO) hosted a White-nose Syndrome web conference that was held June 24, 2009, titled, “White-Nose Syndrome in bats, Bat White-Nose Syndrome Research and Modeling: A Prelude to the NIMBioS Workshop, June 2009.” The goal of the web conference was to provide background information on the current knowledge of WNS distribution and research, as well as to provide insight into the capabilities of the modeling approaches that were discussed at the NIMBioS (National Institute for Mathematical and Biological Synthesis), workshop, June 29 – July 1 at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The web conference was designed mainly as an orientation for the NIMBioS workshop participants, however, the information presented will be of interest to the broader WNS investigation community. A link to view the web conference and the list of presenters can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/whitenose/wnsNIMBioSWorkshopJune2009.html>

### Conference and Meeting Dates to Remember

**June 29-July 1:** NIMBioS, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Title: NIMBioS Investigative Workshop: Modeling White-nose Syndrome in Bats, [http://www.nimbios.org/announcements/WS\\_Bats](http://www.nimbios.org/announcements/WS_Bats)

**July 13-15:** Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Long Beach, CA <http://www.wafwa.org/>

**July 19-26:** 15th International Congress of Speleology, Kerrville, TX <http://www.ics2009.us/welcome.html>

**July 27-31:** Wildlife Action Plan Coordinators Meeting

**August 2-6:** International Wildlife Disease Association Conference, Semiahmoo Resort, Blaine, WA <http://sites.google.com/site/wda2009/>

**August 9-12:** 2009 Southeast Bat Diversity Network Bat Blitz, Mark Twain National Forest, MO [http://www.sbdn.org/blitz\\_info.html](http://www.sbdn.org/blitz_info.html)

**August 11-13:** 2009 WNS Summer Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA, at the Omni William Penn Hotel. Please contact Noelle Rayman ([Noelle\\_Rayman@fws.gov](mailto:Noelle_Rayman@fws.gov)) for more information.

**August 28-29:** 2009 8th Annual Great Lakes Bat Festival, Milwaukee County Zoo, WI <http://www.batconservation.org/content/Batfestival.html>

### Other Updates

**Cave Signs** – Please contact Ryan Smith ([ryan.smith@state.vt.us](mailto:ryan.smith@state.vt.us)) regarding ordering cave closure and WNS advisory signs. Cave sign templates can be viewed on Quickplace under “Discussion” along the left hand side of the main page, then click on Cave Closure Sign (Ryan Smith). Please review the four templates posted to create a generic sign(s) to fit your purposes. To get access to Quickplace, please contact Kim Miller ([kjmiller@usgs.gov](mailto:kjmiller@usgs.gov)) or Anne Ballmann

([aballmann@usgs.gov](mailto:aballmann@usgs.gov)) for username and password information.

### Outreach

**Bill Gates (Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Alabama)** – I attended the Southeast regional section of the National Speleological Society (NSS) event (SERA 2009) near Masseyville, GA, on May 29 and 30. The Nashville Grotto organized this year’s event. Cavers were asked ahead of time not to bring gear and footwear used in affected states and buffer states to SERA. They had a display and materials for decontamination onsite. A caver named Chris Hulbert made a wonderful display of WNS info based on the NSS, USGS, and Region 5 websites. The first article in the magazine they developed for the event discussed WNS. They did another very creative thing to educate cavers about WNS. All who wished to enter a raffle had to come by the WNS tent to learn about it and then get a bat sticker with WNS printed on it on their raffle ticket. This was one of 5 or 6 stickers they needed before they could enter the raffle. Organizers indicated an official count of about 500 attendees, about 1/2 of which I estimate entered the WNS tent while I was present.

The biggest complaint lodged by cavers was that commercial caves were not closed. Their biggest concern was that decontaminating ropes may affect their strength. Their main hope is that they will be able to cave again in closed sites in the not-too-distant future. The vast majority of cavers seemed to be generally abiding by the Service’s recommendations based on my conversations. Overall, I was very impressed with the effort the Nashville Grotto (and likely the NSS in general) put into education of cavers about WNS. The caving community is very receptive to attendance by scientists at their events to discuss WNS.

As a result of the event, two cavers approached me about attending meetings of area grottos (e.g.,

Nashville, Atlanta, and Birmingham) to provide a presentation on WNS and to publish articles in the NSS magazine and grotto newsletters. I plan to educate a few key cavers about WNS and have them make presentations to area grottos (we already did so to the Huntsville Grotto) since I cannot afford the time to cover them all and I think cavers will respond well to other cavers. The two that initially approached me are recruiting a few others to be trained and are checking key caving community chat sites (e.g., tagnet and cavechat) to make a list of issues/concerns being expressed so we can design the presentations to address these issues/concerns. Feedback from early presentations will be incorporated into later ones. I am working behind the scenes currently to address the publications request.

### Press and Publications Recent News Articles/Videos for June

FederalNewsRadio.com – An interview with Marvin Moriarty (USFWS Region 5 Regional Director). Title: Holy White Nose, Batman! (8:28). <http://www.federalnewsradio.com/index.php?nid=15&sid=1692398>

Vermont Public Radio – VT Edition Interview with Scott Darling on Federal funds for White-nose Syndrome research. [http://www.vpr.net/news\\_detail/85125/](http://www.vpr.net/news_detail/85125/)

Associated Press – Article regarding the WNS Congressional hearing. <http://www.kentucky.com/512/story/819090.html>

Channel 33/42 (abc) Birmingham, AL – Article and video of Jeff Gardner discussing WNS. Title: Alabama Bats at Risk. <http://www.abc3340.com/news/stories/0609/628089.html>

The Jacksonville News – Article: Jeff Gardner talks to Kiwanians about Talladega National Forest.

<http://www.jaxnews.com/news/2009/jn-localnews-0519-jbacchus-9e19p1349.htm>

The Anniston Star – Article titled Dagmar Thurmond discusses the cave closures in Alabama.

[http://www.annistonstar.com/pages/full\\_story?article-Officials%20take%20action%20to%20save%20Alabama-s%20bats%20=&page\\_label=results\\_content&id=2618914-Officials+take+action+to+save+Alabama-s+bats&widget=push&open=&](http://www.annistonstar.com/pages/full_story?article-Officials%20take%20action%20to%20save%20Alabama-s%20bats%20=&page_label=results_content&id=2618914-Officials+take+action+to+save+Alabama-s+bats&widget=push&open=&)

Science Magazine Podcast - Science's Erik Stokstad discusses Robert Zimmerman's article titled, "Biologists struggle to solve bat deaths."

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/324/5931/1134/DC1>

### White-nose Syndrome Timeline of Events

As an increasing number of biologists and researchers become engaged nationally with the investigation, it is imperative that agency personnel stay current with ongoing research and collaboration efforts. However, those involved may be at different levels of WNS knowledge and so in an attempt to catch those new to the WNS investigation up to speed, we have provided an abbreviated timeline of WNS events that begin in winter 2007 when the fungus was first discovered in New York and goes to the present. Below is an abbreviated timeline of WNS investigation events.

#### 2007

- Regular survey year for biennial Indiana bat surveys. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) observed unusual white fungus on the noses of bats and many dead bats at one site in New York (Haile's cave). White-nose syndrome was named.
- Three additional sites in a localized area of New York with unusual bat behavior or death were reported by local cavers.

- No other surveys across the range of the Indiana bat resulted in any similar observations.
- Total of four known sites in New York with unusual bat behavior, fungus, and/or deaths.

#### January 2008

- "Off" year for Indiana bat surveys throughout much of the range, but USFWS and State biologists conducted surveys to see if there were any signs of fungus observed previous winter. This resulted in multiple new reports of signs of WNS in New York and Vermont including mortality of bats.
- Communication among researchers and biologists primarily through e-mails at this point. NYSDEC receiving majority of inquiries, news media calls, etc.
- USFWS received request from NYSDEC biologist to assist with overall coordination of WNS investigation.
- USFWS/Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife (VTDFW) and NYSDEC press releases on WNS and recommendations for staying out of caves/mines in New York and Vermont.
- January 28, 2008 - First conference call among USFWS, USGS, NYSDEC and VTDFW to begin broader coordination effort.
- Bats primarily being sent to Cornell and NYSDEC pathology lab (New York bats) and USGS Madison Wildlife Health Science Center (all other states).
- Many other researchers became interested in helping and receiving bats to test for a variety of pathogens. USFWS helps coordinate conference calls among researchers.
- USFWS WNS webpage up for public dissemination of information.

## February 2008

- USFWS established a database for tracking results of surveys for WNS surveillance. States as far away as Kentucky and Missouri participated in surveillance. Maintenance of this database is an ongoing priority.
- February 5, 2008 - conference call among NYSDEC, VTDFW, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (WVDNR), Cornell, USGS, and USFWS to discuss status of investigation, status of new surveys, decontamination protocols, human health concerns, and outreach.
- NYSDEC receives information that a white fungus appears on noses of bats in Germany without any signs of mortality.
- Cave visitation form put on WNS webpage to track movements of sites visited by cavers after visiting any of the four original NY sites to investigate potential human spread of WNS.
- USFWS (with input from researchers and States) begins development of first decontamination protocols (summer and winter) due to concerns that scientists might inadvertently spread WNS.
- USFWS develops WNS FAQs with input from USGS and other researchers.
- WNS session held at joint Northeast Bat Working Group and Southern Bat Diversity Network to alert state, federal and non-governmental biologist to spreading threat of adverse impacts to eastern bat populations.

## March 2008

- March 6, 2008 - USFWS initiated weekly conference calls for State and USFWS biologists to discuss updates and protocols and get information from researchers.

- USFWS continues to assist researchers by holding a conference call for them to share information across labs.
- WNS monitoring committee, which included four USGS staff, formed in March to coordinate research. Realized the immediate need for summer protocols which included wing damage scoring; guano collection; fungal collection; additional decontamination procedures.
- Late winter consensus among State and Federal Biologists and researchers to convene a meeting/workshop in June.
- USFWS applied for Director's deferred funding.
- By end of 2007-2008 winter, four States with affected sites (New York, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts) and possible sites in Pennsylvania.

## April 2008

- USFWS (R3 and R5) applied for Preventing Extinction funding.
- Jeremy Coleman, USFWS New York Field Office (NYFO) term employee, was assigned to coordinate WNS investigation in close coordination with endangered species biologists, Robyn Niver and Susi von Oettingen.
- Rehabilitators began contacting USFWS and States for direction.
- June meeting coordination.

## May 2008

- May 14, 2008 - Meeting at Cornell among Cornell researchers, USFWS, NYS Department of Health, and NYDEC to discuss WNS.
- May 30, 2008 - Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies sends letter to Director of USFWS requesting additional resources be devoted to WNS investigation.

- June meeting coordination.

## June 2008

- June 9-11, 2008 - WNS workshop held in Albany, NY. Out of the workshop came four hypotheses warranting further investigation:
- Workshop was successful in improving coordination and communication with agencies, and resulted in formation of several State and Federal management task groups: hibernacula surveys, swarm/pre-hibernation surveys, summer data, citizen reports, genetic samples, decontamination protocols, communication plan, WNS field diagnostic, captive management, maternity colony assessments, exit count protocols and acoustic surveys.
- The USFWS proposed an overall WNS coordination structure after getting input from Colony Collapse Disorder leads.
- USFWS assisted states with prioritizing research needs for approximately \$50,000 from Northeast Regional Conservation Needs funding.

## August 2008

- USFWS drafted a Memorandum of Understanding for USFWS, USGS, and States.
- USFWS drafted a white paper outlining internal coordination roles and responsibilities for various levels of the agency.
- Decontamination protocols revised.
- Task groups from June meeting had limited success given other workload. The workshop proceedings were never completed for publication (still an area of interest though). Notes were posted by caving community participants.
- FY08 Preventing Extinction and Director's Deferred funding and allocation was announced.

### September - December 2008

- Various field studies began which included collecting wing scores and weights during swarm; body composition study conducted by Boston University.
- September 30, 2008 - USFWS held conference call with several cave organization contacts to share information on WNS.
- USGS researcher was lead author of Science paper identifying *Geomyces* spp. fungus at WNS sites (Bleher et al. 2008).
- October 7, 2008 - The USFWS announced a request for proposals for WNS-related research/management on grants. gov. Interested parties were instructed to match proposals to key hypotheses from June meeting or priority management needs. Advertised for a month and 11 proposals were submitted. USFWS staff and Paul Cryan, USGS, evaluated the proposals (November 24 was the first conference call). Seven were selected for funding. Biologists from three offices are now point of contacts for the projects.

### January - March 2009

- Biennial Indiana bat surveys and other WNS surveys were conducted this winter. The USFWS coordinates this rangewide effort and WNS added to the complexities this season. Pennsylvania State Game Commission maintains affected county mapping.
- WNS detected in New York, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, West Virginia, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.
- Paul Cryan attended a conference in Europe and provided additional information about similar white fungus in European bats (but no large mortality).
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania acted as lead for multi-state State Wildlife Grant proposal application. Pennsylvania is to hire a WNS coordinator to track completion of tasks funded by SWG if multi-state SWG grant application is successful.
- USFWS initiated conference calls regarding the Virginia big-eared bat and potential for captive rearing/breeding. Discussed with WVDNR, USGS, Smithsonian Institute, American Zoological Association, IUCN, and National Zoo.
- February 17, 2009 – USFWS NYFO/New England Field Office (NEFO) briefed R5 Regional Director and conducted a brown bag lunch seminar.
- February 20, 2009 – USFWS and NYSDEC convened a webinar to update everyone on progress of ongoing research. Following the webinar, five new task groups were formed: Maternity colony monitoring, including post-emergency survival, population assessment, reproductive success; Control and mitigation (split into lab and field groups) which includes treatment for bats and hibernacula, cave closure, and captive rearing; Reporting and data management, including reporting on status of investigation, compilation and management of sample database; Transmission including bat to bat, bat to hibernacula, and human connection; and Susceptibility and research guidance, including species specificity, new questions to pursue, outstanding data needs, etc.
- FY09 joint region (R3, 4 and 5) Preventing Extinction proposal was submitted.
- March 5, 2009 – Service convened a conference call with geneticists to discuss the implications of ongoing mortality due to WNS to the recovery of the Indiana bat. Discussions and investigations are ongoing.
- USFWS proposed and is proceeding with a Structured Decision Management (SDM) process to address control of WNS spread and impacts to bats.
- March 13, 2009 - USFWS NYFO staff gave WNS presentation at the Washington Office (Arlington).
- Anne Secord, NYFO contaminants chief, was successful in getting about \$300,000 of off refuge funding to examine bats for environmental contaminants that may be implicated in WNS.
- USFWS developed and released cave/mine advisory. This effort was coordinated with NPS and USGS.
- March 26, 2009 – Cave advisory was released to the public. Outreach is underway.
- March 31, 2009 – WNS discussed during DOI meeting in Philadelphia.

### April 2009

- Weekly conference calls began for SDM process.
- Biweekly conference calls between States and Feds continue.
- April 6, 2009 – Noelle Rayman was hired as Assistant WNS Coordinator.
- April 15, 2009 – NYFO/NEFO staff met with R5 Regional Office to meet Keith Hastie, newly designated as R5 RO liaison to Field Offices working on WNS.
- April 16, 2009 – USFWS, NPS, USGS call to discuss National Plan, SDM, and upcoming briefings
- April 30, 2009 –VTDFW, USFWS, USGS and NPS briefed NGOs and Congressional staff in Washington

D.C. regarding the rapid spread of WNS and potential impacts to bat populations in the northeast.

#### May 2009

- May 1, 2009 – Congressional Briefings continued.
- Weekly conference calls continue to address agendas and expectations for the upcoming SDM workshop.
- NYFO and NYSDEC biologists attended the Wildlife Damage Management Meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY to provide update on WNS investigation to Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators (NWCs), and to see how NWCs can assist with the investigation. Drafted NWC decontamination protocol.
- NYFO biologists met with NYSDEC, NSS biologists in Albany, NY to discuss cave/mine closure advisories.
- Drafts of the researcher/caver and nuisance wildlife control operator decontamination protocols were revised and sent out for review to state and federal agencies.
- May 11-13, 2009 – SDM workshop is held at USFWS National Conservation Training Center. The purpose of the workshop was to frame the decision of how to control the spread and impacts of WNS during the winter of 2009-2010.
- Biweekly conference calls between States and Feds continue.
- NYFO collaborated with other regional Field Offices and State biologists to address the need for cave signs.
- Revised decontamination protocols disseminated.

#### June 2009

- June 4, 2009 - Congressional Hearings took place where the USFWS, USFS, NSS, VTDFW, BCI, and Boston University gave testimonies regarding the implications of WNS and funding

needs for additional staff and research.

- USFWS and USGS drafted National and Regional Science Support Partnership proposals to fund WNS research to be conducted by USGS.
- SDM conference calls continued between Federal and State biologists to discuss tasks and upcoming deadlines regarding drafting of the framework to make WNS management decisions.
- Biweekly conference calls between States and Feds continue.
- NYFO hosted a WNS web conference where researchers presented updates to current research and modeling projects.
- USFWS developed RFP to solicit research proposals that will be funded by FY09 Preventing Extinction money.
- FY09 Preventing Extinction RFP was posted on grants.gov.
- The first of biweekly USFWS biologist conference calls was held to broaden communication between Region 3, 4 and 5 USFWS biologists working on WNS.

#### Examples of Ongoing Activity

- Updating R5 WNS webpage.
- Bi-weekly State/Federal/Canadian conference calls.
- Searching and applying for funding.
- Tracking current contracts/agreements.
- Field work.
- Responding to public and media inquiries.
- Briefing new involved parties (new States, etc.)
- Developing briefing statements and materials.
- Presenting information at scientific meetings, bat working group meetings, NGO meetings, etc.

- Additional task groups and subgroups are being formed as the needs are identified, including: captive management/rehabilitation, fungal investigation, outreach.

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#### August 2009

