

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL BAT WEEK
October 25-31, 2015

By the Secretary of the Interior of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS bats are vital to the sustainability of natural ecosystems, national economies, and human health by pollinating plants including fruits and vegetables, dispersing seeds to ensure healthy functioning ecosystems, and by controlling damaging insect pests with a potential benefit to agriculture of more than \$3 billion in pest control every year; and

WHEREAS bat populations throughout eastern North America have been affected by white-nose syndrome, a deadly fungus that has killed millions of bats and threatens the sustainability of bat populations; and

WHEREAS the Department's participation through four Bureaus—the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management—is leading the international response to the disease for the Nation in partnership with other Federal agencies, states, non-governmental organizations, and universities; and

WHEREAS the Department, on behalf of the United States Government, has entered into an agreement with the governments of Mexico and Canada to strengthen cooperation, coordination, and information sharing related to the conservation and management of all bat species throughout North America; and

WHEREAS the Department has invested more than \$35 million in Federal funds to develop research, inventory, and monitoring of bat populations, potential treatment methods, decontamination protocols, and other mechanisms to understand and address this deadly disease; and

WHEREAS it is critically important to expand Federal efforts to take new steps, including development of new public-private partnerships and increased citizen engagement, to promote the health of bat populations, to increase our understanding of bats through research and monitoring, and to help restore bat populations to healthy levels;

NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of the vital significance of protecting the health of bat populations, I, Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior, do hereby proclaim October 25-31, 2015, as National Bat Week at the Department of the Interior. I call upon the American public to join us in recognizing the importance of bats and the stewardship role the Department plays in providing valuable habitat for bats, research, and recovery actions throughout the Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 23 day of October, 2015, the two-hundred fortieth year of the Independence of the United States of America.



Secretary of the Interior