

Endangered Species Status for Tricolored Bat

On September 14, 2022, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published a proposal in the Federal Register to list the tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service has up to 12-months from the date the proposal was published to make a final determination, either to list the tricolored bat under the ESA or to withdraw the proposal. The Service determined the bat faces extinction primarily due to the rangewide impacts of white-nose syndrome (WNS), a deadly fungal disease affecting cave-dwelling bats across North America. Because tricolored bat populations have been greatly reduced due to WNS, surviving bat populations are now more vulnerable to other stressors such as human disturbance and habitat loss.

The tricolored bat may begin appearing on Official Species Lists requested from the Service before a determination is made on their listing status. Species proposed for listing are afforded limited protections under the ESA and the “conference” provisions of Section 7 apply to for species proposed for listing. In addition, if/when the listing becomes effective (typically 30 days after publication of the final rule in the Federal Register), the prohibitions against jeopardizing its continued existence and “take” will apply. Therefore, we recommend that the effects of proposed projects on tricolored bats and their habitat be analyzed and minimized. Contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s New Jersey Ecological Services Office for assistance regarding tricolored bats in New Jersey.

Generally, if tricolored bat appears on your Official Species List and proposed activities will be completed prior to a determination, tricolored bat will not need to be consulted on for a Section 7 consultation. However, we recommend evaluating/minimizing effects and note that the Section 7 conference requirements may apply to certain projects.

The tricolored bat is a small insectivorous bat that typically overwinters in caves, abandoned mines and tunnels, and road-associated culverts (southern portion of the range). The tricolored bat spends the rest of the year in forested habitats, typically roosting among live and dead leaf clusters. For more information on tricolored bats and the proposed rule, please see: <https://www.fws.gov/species/tricolored-bat-perimyotis-subflavus>. For more information on WNS, please see: <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>.