

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

White-nose syndrome (WNS) is a disease that affects hibernating bats. The name describes the manifestation of a white fungus that appears on the muzzle and other body parts of bats. The fungus *Geomyces destructans* is known to be associated with WNS.

The syndrome was first documented in New York in the winter of 2006-2007. WNS has spread rapidly across the eastern United States and eastern Canada. The fungus associated with WNS has been detected as far west as Oklahoma.

Although it is not clear exactly how the fungus and disease affect bats, WNS is associated with extensive mortality of bats in eastern North America. Bats with WNS exhibit uncharacteristic behavior during cold winter months, including flying outside during the daytime and clustering near the entrances of hibernacula (winter shelter). Bats have been found sick and dying in unprecedented numbers in and around caves and mines. WNS has killed more than 1 million bats in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada. In some hibernacula, 90 to 100 percent of bats have died.

WNS is not yet known to occur in Arizona. However, people that use caves or may otherwise come into contact with bats should be aware of the syndrome. They should also be aware of the concepts and tools that are available to help fight spread of the disease.

The links below provide frequently updated information on white-nose syndrome, including general biology, locations of occurrence, reporting procedures, and equipment decontamination protocols. Most of the material that may be useful to address the issue can be found at those websites. For example, decontamination procedures for cavers and researchers can be found on the Fish and Wildlife Service website through the link below.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - White-Nose Syndrome
www.fws.gov/WhiteNoseSyndrome/

USGS Fort Collins Service Center
www.fort.usgs.gov/WNS/

USGS National Wildlife Health Center - White-Nose Syndrome
www.nwhc.usgs.gov/disease_information/white-nose_syndrome/

Arizona Game and Fish Department - Bats and White-nose Syndrome
http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/whiteNoseBats.shtml

Western Bat Working Group - White-Nose Syndrome
www.wbwg.org/conservation/whitenosesyndrome/whitenose.html

For more information, or to report any relevant information regarding white-nose syndrome in Arizona, please contact either:

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