

# News Release

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **New Video Provides Amazing First Look Inside Endangered Bat's Only Documented Natural Roost**

VERO BEACH, Fla. – The discovery of a rare Florida bonneted bat roost in a tree cavity at Avon Park Air Force Range (APAFR) in central Florida has yielded what is believed to be the first-ever video of the endangered bats inside a natural roost.

The video lasts about 85 seconds and can be seen at [www.fws.gov/verobeach/20141015FloridaBonnetedBatRoostNR.html](http://www.fws.gov/verobeach/20141015FloridaBonnetedBatRoostNR.html) or [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8P3LADCYUxo&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8P3LADCYUxo&feature=youtu.be).

“This is a remarkable and significant find. It’s the first active natural roost that we’ve confirmed. The discovery was made possible through great collaboration and partnerships. The fantastic video makes the find even more exciting,” said Larry Williams, Florida State Supervisor of Ecological Services for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

“The roost was discovered by Greg Thompson (of Archbold Biological Station) during the Air Force’s annual survey for red cockaded woodpeckers at Avon Park last year,” said Brian Scofield, a USFWS biologist assigned to APAFR. “After Greg’s discovery, he asked me to identify the bat species in the roost.”

Scofield identified them as bonneted bats by using a device that’s able to record their calls. The bonneted bat calls were also independently confirmed by the Florida Bat Conservancy.

According to Scofield, bonneted bats were still using the roost tree on September 25, 2014. He said Archbold Biological Station (ABS) intern Stephen Mugel held the pole with the video camera mounted on it, while Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) biologist Jennifer Myers operated the camera by remote control. Video footage suggests at least five bonneted bats are using this enlarged cavity.

“The personnel at Avon Park Air Force Range work diligently to train our nation’s warriors and prepare them for combat. We consider our stewardship of the environment to be a top priority. The collaboration and discoveries at Avon Park Air Force Range will expand the understanding of the endangered bonneted bat thus contributing to its preservation,” said Lt. Col. Kevin Beeker, Commander, Detachment 1, 23rd Fighter Group at APAFR.

The Florida bonneted bat gained Federal protection when listed as “endangered” by the USFWS in October 2013. This species is also protected by FWC. The Florida bonneted bat is a large, non-migratory, insectivorous bat. It’s endemic to Florida and is the largest bat in Florida. The species uses forests, wetlands and other natural habitats. It also uses available habitat in residential and urban areas.

Florida bonneted bats face a wide array of problems. These problems include fewer, smaller populations only found in parts of South Florida. They’re challenged by pesticide applications, habitat loss, and with managed landscapes replacing natural forest lands there are fewer tree cavities for them to use as roost sites.

Locating this natural roost and others is key to better understanding the species’ roosting habits and habitat preferences.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).*

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