



WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME IN WASHINGTON

REPORT BAT SIGHTINGS

Report sick/dead bats or a group of live bats by phone or online.

360.902.2515

WDFW.WA.GOV/BATS

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www.whitenosesyndrome.org



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

What is white-nose syndrome?

- White-nose syndrome is a fungal disease that has killed millions of hibernating bats, mostly in eastern North America.
- The disease is confirmed in 33 states and seven Canadian provinces since it was first documented in 2006.
- In March 2016, the first case of the disease was confirmed in Washington, about 30 miles east of Seattle.
- The disease is primarily spread by bat-to-bat contact, but bats can also contract the disease from an area where the fungus is present.
- White-nose syndrome does not pose a threat to humans, pets or other animals.

How does white-nose syndrome affect bats?

- The fungus *pseudogymnoascus destructans* can grow on the nose, wings and ears of an infected bat during winter hibernation, giving it a white, fuzzy appearance. After bats wake from hibernation, this fuzzy white appearance goes away.
- Even though the fungus may not be visible, it invades and damages deep skin tissues. Infected bats arouse more often during hibernation which causes them to use crucial fat reserves, leading to possible starvation and death.
- Infected bats may also die from wing damage, inability to regulate body temperature, breathing disruptions, and dehydration.



Little brown bat found in western Washington in March 2016. The fungus damaged the bat's wings making it unable to fly. Photos courtesy of Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)

How can I help?

- Whenever possible, avoid entering areas where bats may live to limit the potential of spreading the disease and disturbing roosting bats.
- If you come into contact with crevices in rock cliffs, talus areas, caves or mines, please clean your gear. If possible, use the decontamination guidelines at www.whitenosesyndrome.org.
- Improve bat habitats. Reduce lighting around your home, minimize tree clearing, and protect streams and wetlands. For more information on how to conserve bat habitat, visit wdfw.wa.gov/living/bats.html.