

**To: Natural Resource/Conservation Managers**  
**From: Dr. Jonathan Sleeman, Center Director, USGS National Wildlife Health Center**  
**Title: White-nose syndrome discovered in Ohio, new county in Maryland, and New Brunswick**  
**Date: April 6, 2011**

White-nose syndrome, a devastating disease of hibernating bats, continues to spread to new locations in the northeast and mid-Atlantic states. Ohio has recently announced confirmed cases of white-nose syndrome (WNS) in Lawrence County; Maryland, which first announced WNS in 2010, has reported that WNS has been confirmed in an adjacent County (Washington); and New Brunswick, Canada, is reporting bats infected with WNS for the first time (in Albert County).

State and federal biologists surveyed Ohio mines in February and March for white-nose syndrome and to assess bat populations. Samples collected in an abandoned mine, which is gated and protected from public access, on the Wayne National Forest were tested at the [Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study](#) (SCWDS) in Georgia where scientists confirmed presence of the disease by using histopathology (microscopic examination of tissues) in little brown bats. The [Ohio Department of Natural Resources](#) issued a [news release](#) about the findings on March 30.

Biologists from the [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#) (MD DNR) have also been surveying mines and caves where bats hibernate in that state. They found a dead little brown bat at an abandoned mine and submitted it to the [USGS National Wildlife Health Center](#) (NWHC) for testing, where WNS was confirmed by histopathological examination. This WNS finding in western Washington County was announced in a [news release](#) on March 29. The MD DNR says that this is the second site where WNS has been documented.

Researchers from the [New Brunswick Museum](#) discovered the first WNS-infected cave site in that province in Albert County. They reported that at least 25 percent of approximately 6,000 bats in the cave have died as a result of WNS. The cave is known as New Brunswick's most important bat hibernaculum. Bat carcasses (little brown bats and Northern long-eared bats) from the cave were tested at the [Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre](#) (University of Prince Edward Island), the University of Guelph, and at Agriculture Canada, Ottawa, all of which have confirmed the diagnosis. The New Brunswick Museum has taken the lead in monitoring bat populations to detect the potential spread of WNS in New Brunswick. They issued their findings in a [news release](#) on March 29.

Montgomery County, Tennessee, is still the farthest location west where bats have been identified with laboratory-confirmed disease (WNS). Bats in Missouri and Oklahoma have tested positive for DNA from the fungus *Geomyces destructans*, but disease (WNS) has not yet been confirmed at these sites nor has unusual bat mortality been observed. It is important to note the distinction between detecting the disease agent (the fungus, *Geomyces destructans*) versus actual infection of bats with the disease (WNS). Scientists at the NWHC have created documents that describe [case definitions](#) for WNS and the various [sampling methods](#) used to diagnose WNS in bats.

More information on WNS in bats can be found at:

- ❖ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: <http://www.fws.gov/whitenosesyndrome/>
- ❖ USGS National Wildlife Health Center: [http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/disease\\_information/white-nose\\_syndrome/](http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/disease_information/white-nose_syndrome/)
- ❖ USGS Fort Collins Science Center: <http://www.fort.usgs.gov/WNS/>

**To report or request assistance for wildlife mortality events or health issues, visit**

[http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/mortality\\_events/reporting.jsp](http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/mortality_events/reporting.jsp) or contact Dr. Anne Ballmann, 608-270-2445, [aballmann@usgs.gov](mailto:aballmann@usgs.gov), Dr. LeAnn White, 608-270-2491, [clwhite@usgs.gov](mailto:clwhite@usgs.gov), Dr. Thierry Work, 808-792-9520,

[thierry\\_work@usgs.gov](mailto:thierry_work@usgs.gov) (Hawaii and Pacific Islands) or Jennifer Bradsby, 608-270-2443, [jbradsby@usgs.gov](mailto:jbradsby@usgs.gov) (single mortality events nationwide).

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