



**National Wildlife Health Center
Wildlife Health Bulletin 2018-001**

**Winter 2017/2018 Bat Submission Guidelines and
Highlights from the 2016/2017 White-nose Syndrome Surveillance Season**

To: Natural Resource/Conservation Managers
From: Dr. Jonathan Sleeman, Center Director, USGS National Wildlife Health Center
Date: January 16, 2018

Updated guidance from the USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) is now available for [bat submissions for the 2017/2018 white-nose syndrome \(WNS\) surveillance season](#). These guidelines are posted on the NWHC [WNS Web page](#) and replace all previous NWHC bat submission criteria. Once again, reference charts and an updated WNS Management Area map are included to assist submitters with identifying priority species and collecting appropriate samples for submission to a diagnostic laboratory. These guidelines support the surveillance objectives of the [WNS National Plan](#) designed to identify new geographic locations and bat species impacted by *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (*Pd*) and WNS.

The NWHC can answer questions about designing WNS surveillance and response plans relevant to your state, territory, or region and help with testing samples collected as part of opportunistic or targeted surveillance efforts in accordance with the national *Pd* surveillance strategy. Tribal, State, and Federal agencies who have questions about ongoing surveillance efforts or who may wish to participate should contact Anne Ballmann (608-270-2445, aballmann@usgs.gov).

2016/2017 National White-nose Syndrome & *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* Surveillance Season Highlights

In the 2016/2017 season (Nov 2016 – Oct 2017), 27 states submitted samples that were obtained by a combination of active and passive surveillance methods for evaluation of *Pd* and/or WNS. An additional three states provided samples obtained exclusively through passive surveillance methods. More than 3,800 samples were tested, including over 2,250 obtained from 24 species of bats and 1,600+ environmental samples from approximately 190 locations (139 hibernacula, 23 summer roosts/foraging pathways, 30+ opportunistic sites). In all, *Pd* was detected at 33 new hibernacula during the 2017 season, including 16 sites where no clinical signs of WNS were observed in the bat population at the time of sampling. Nearly 95 percent of all initial detections of *Pd* have originated from samples collected from bats rather than from environmental substrates collected inside of hibernacula. Furthermore, sick or dead bats found opportunistically on the above-ground landscape during winter/early spring were confirmed with WNS in nine new counties, while spring trapping at summer roost sites or along foraging pathways did not detect any range expansion in the distribution of *Pd*. Data analyses and modeling of risk factors associated with *Pd* movement from data collected during the past four years of the project are currently underway.

In winter 2016-2017, WNS was confirmed for the first time in Nebraska (Cass County) and Oklahoma (Delaware County) where *Pd* was first detected in 2015. Bats with *Pd* were found at hibernacula in additional counties in both states in spring 2017 as well. Two new species, southeastern myotis (*M. austroriparius*) and Yuma bat (*M. yumanensis*) were confirmed with WNS in 2017 in Alabama and Washington, respectively. This increased the total number of North American bat species confirmed with WNS to nine. Finally, Texas announced the detection of *Pd* in six counties (Childress, Collingsworth, Cottle, Hardeman, King, and Scurry) and on two new bat species, cave myotis (*M. velifer*) and the western sub-species of Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii townsendii*). No clinical signs or mortality were reported in Texas. Mississippi remains the only other state to have reported detection of *Pd* in hibernacula in the absence of confirmed WNS. The total number of states with confirmed cases of WNS increased to 30 in 2017, while the number of affected Canadian provinces remained at five.

A current map of the distribution of confirmed and suspected cases of WNS is available [here](#).

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For more information about the interagency response to WNS, please visit <http://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>

WNS poster and handout designed for use with the general public is available from the WNS Interagency Communications and Outreach Working Group: [White-nose Syndrome in Bats](#)

New USGS Fact Sheet on WNS is available online: [White-Nose Syndrome in North American Bats – USGS updates](#)

Disease Investigation Services:

To request diagnostic services or report wildlife mortality, please contact the NWHC at **608-270-2480** or by email at NWHC-epi@usgs.gov, and a field epidemiologist will be available to discuss the case. To report wildlife mortality events in Hawaii or Pacific Island territories, please contact the Honolulu Field Station at 808-792-9520 or email Thierry Work at thierrywork@usgs.gov. Further information can be found at <http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/services/>.

Wildlife Mortality Reporting and Diagnostic Services Request Worksheet

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the scientific and technical services we provide, please do not hesitate to contact NWHC Director Jonathan Sleeman at 608-270-2401, jsleeman@usgs.gov.

To see past Wildlife Health Bulletins, click [here](#).

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