Bat white-nose syndrome confirmed

Diagnostic tests conducted by the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre at the Atlantic Veterinary College confirm the presence of bat white-nose syndrome (WNS) in Prince Edward Island’s bat population.

“While this finding was expected, it is more bad news for bats in eastern North America,” said Rosemary Curley, biologist with the Department of Agriculture and Forestry. "Since it was first discovered in the US in 2006, WNS has decimated bat populations and unfortunately there is little that can be done to protect them from this disease.”

White-nose syndrome is a fatal fungal infection that causes bats to wake up frequently during hibernation. Because there are no food sources available, they die from starvation and hypothermia.

Over the last several years, it is estimated that more than six million bats in eastern North America have died from this disease which continues to spread into new regions. Since the first report on Prince Edward Island in early February, the Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division has received 19 reports of dead and live animals from ten locations across the province. Staff were able to collect eight bats for testing.

The public is asked to report any further observations of bats to the Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division at (902)368-4683 or Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre at (902)628-4314.

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