

PRESS RELEASE

April 17, 2023

Today, the North American Bat Conservation Alliance (NABCA) published the first ever State of the Bats in North America report, highlighting the importance of bat conservation, not only for their biodiversity value, but for the ecosystem and economic services bats provide in terms of pest control, pollination, seed dispersal, ecotourism, and their contributions to innovation and science. The report also indicates that 47% of the 154 known bat species across North America are at risk of severe population decline in the next 15 years.

“State fish and wildlife agencies are at the forefront of conservation and protecting our nation’s fish, wildlife and natural resources,” said Curt Melcher, Director of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and President of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies. “Bats are essential to our ecosystem. We look forward to working with our partners in collaborative conservation efforts that will change the current trajectory for bats.”

State Fish and Wildlife Agencies have designated nearly 100 different kinds of bats as species in greatest conservation need in State Wildlife Action Plans. The bipartisan Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (S1149), which was recently reintroduced by Senators Heinrich (D-N.M.) and Tillis (R-N.C.), would provide states with the resources needed to help reverse the decline of bats.

Highlights from the report include:

- **Bats are threatened.** The forces of global change threaten bats worldwide. In North America, some of the top threats to bats include climate change, habitat loss, and White-Nosed Syndrome (WNS), which has killed millions of hibernating bats in the United States and Canada.
- **Bats need our help.** There are many ways to support bat conservation. Create and protect bat habitat in your own backyard, explore nature responsibly by avoiding disturbance of bats and spreading of pathogens, make climate-friendly choices to reduce your carbon footprint, and speak up for bats by sharing the importance of bats and bat conservation with others and supporting conservation efforts and policies that protect nature and wildlife.
- **Bats are diverse and beneficial.** Bats provide economic benefits to agriculture by consuming insect pests, improving crop yields, and reducing pesticide use. Bats contribute to forest health, and nectar-feeding bats pollinate plants. Each year, bat research leads to new scientific discoveries and technologies, and watching masses of bats emerge from caves and bridges generate ecotourism dollars in places like Austin, Texas and

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scientists from Bat Conservation International, the North American Bat Monitoring Program; the White-nose Syndrome Response Team; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service (Environment and Climate Change Canada); and the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

Access the full report here: www.stateofthebats.org

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