

Stop

The Invasion



Photographs courtesy of Al Hicks, New York Department of Environmental Conservation and Ryan von Linden, New York Department of Environmental Conservation

White-Nose Syndrome

Pseudogymnoascus destructans

Report Sightings

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What is it?

White-nose syndrome is a disease caused by the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*. The fungus infects bats in the winter when they hibernate in colonies. The fungus grows on the wings, ears, and muzzle of the bat, which disrupts physiological processes (e.g. thermoregulation) causing them to arouse from hibernation and burn critical fat reserves needed to survive the winter. In addition, the fungus can damage the wings to a point that they cannot fly. So far, nine species of bats have been found with white-nose syndrome, two of which live in Washington. The mortality rate for some species, such as the little brown bat, can be 90-100 percent.

Is it here yet?

Yes. The disease has been found near North Bend, on a little brown bat in 2016 and on a *Yuma myotis* in 2017. The fungus has also been found in Washington on a silver-haired bat, though it hadn't developed white-nose syndrome.

Why should I care?

White-nose syndrome is incredibly dangerous to bats, and could push some bat species towards extinction. A drop in bat populations will also mean a significant increase in populations of the insects that they prey on, some of which are agricultural pests.

What should I do if I find it?

Report a sighting online at www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/report.shtml. You can also [report any sick or dead bats or groups of bats online](#). Remember never to disturb roosting bats or handle bats.

How can we stop it?

The fungus that causes white-nose syndrome is primarily spread by bat-to-bat or bat-to-environment contact, but it has been demonstrated that gear and clothing that come in contact with infected environments can spread the fungus to new locations. To limit its spread, clothing and gear should be decontaminated after entering areas where bats might roost, including caves. See the [National Decontamination Protocol](#). Do not handle living or dead wild bats.



Photograph courtesy of Marvin Moriarty, USFWS

What are its characteristics?

White-nose syndrome is primarily identifiable by the white, fuzzy, fungal growth visible on the noses, wings, or ears of infected bats. The fungus will only be visible on hibernating bats. Once the bats are active, the fungus is no longer visible, but other signs include difficulty flying or damaged wings.

Where do I get more information?

- White-Nose Syndrome: www.whitenosesyndrome.org
- WDFW: wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns

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Sightings**

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