



CONSERVE WILDLIFE
FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY

TO: Volunteers of the *Summer Bat Count*

FROM: Maria Grace, Education & Outreach Manager
MacKenzie Hall, Private Lands Biologist

DATE: June 25, 2008

SUBJECT: Summer Surveys of Bat Roosting Structures

Thank you for your interest in the *Summer Bat Count*, a partnership project between the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey and the New Jersey Endangered and Nongame Species Program.

In New Jersey, bats are a major predator of night-flying insects, including mosquitoes. Thanks to bats, who can each consume thousands of insects each night, people can enjoy summer nights outdoors. More importantly, bats enable farmers and foresters to use less pesticides which saves millions of dollars annually and reduces the amount of toxins in the environment. In other parts of the world, bats play key roles in pollinating flowers and dispersing seeds for important agricultural plants. It is to our benefit to have these wonderful creatures around us.

We currently know very little about the status and distribution of bats in New Jersey. The Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey is encouraging the general public to identify and survey bat roosting locations to promote bat conservation throughout the state. The data generated by the *Summer Bat Count* will help the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey and the NJ Endangered and Nongame Species Program to create distribution maps for some of the state's nine species of bats, determine roosting and feeding habitats, and monitor bat populations over an extended period of time.

During the past two years biologists in the northeast have discovered a mysterious affliction that is affecting bats in parts of New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut and possibly Pennsylvania. The affliction has been named "white nose syndrome" (WNS) due to the white fungus observed around the nose of some of the affected bats. WNS has been observed in several hibernation caves and mines in the affected states and has caused up to 90% mortality in some wintering populations. Currently, very little is known about WNS and its cause. Most scientists expect WNS to spread to surrounding states in the future. The states, federal government, several universities and private organizations are allocating significant resources to track and discover the cause of WNS. Summer roost sites identified during the 2008 *Summer Bat Count* may provide biologists with information needed to monitor summer roost sites for the possible presence of WNS in NJ. There is no evidence to suggest that WNS has any affect on humans. For more information on WNS please visit: www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html If

KEEPING NEW JERSEY'S WILDLIFE IN OUR FUTURE.

PO BOX 400 | TRENTON, NJ 08625-0400 | 609-292-1276

WWW.CONSERVEWILDLIFENJ.ORG

volunteers observe dead or dying bats in their area DO NOT handle the bats, but please contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program immediately by calling Mick Valent at (908) 638-4127.

If you know of a building, bridge, bat box, tree, or other structure that bats roost in during the summer, then all you have to do is visit it twice during the summer and count the bats as they exit at dusk to feed. If you don't know of an existing roost but are still interested in participating, identify some old buildings, barns, or churches in your community and visit them at dusk and observe all sides of the building (more than 1 person is necessary to view all sides at the same time) for bats exiting. If you find bats leaving the structure, then you have discovered a new bat roost!

The *Summer Bat Count* can be an exciting, educational, and fun wildlife viewing activity. **Come and join the bat counters!**

**If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact
Maria Grace at (609) 984-0621 or MacKenzie Hall at (908) 782-4614 x. 104.**

KEEPING NEW JERSEY'S WILDLIFE IN OUR FUTURE.

PO BOX 400 | TRENTON, NJ 08625-0400 | 609-292-1276

WWW.CONSERVEWILDLIFENJ.ORG