

# WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

## What is white-nose syndrome?

White-nose syndrome (WNS) is a disease of hibernating bats caused by a fungus called *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd). WNS affects bats during the winter—growth of the fungus on the bats' skin disturbs hibernation, resulting in dehydration, starvation, and death.



Jesika Reimer

Since the Pd fungus was accidentally introduced to North America around 2006, WNS has killed millions of hibernating bats. Some bat species that used to be common in eastern Canada and the U.S. have experienced massive population declines.

## Signs and symptoms

The disease is not known to be a risk to humans. Bats with WNS show loss of body fat and unusual behaviour during winter, including flying outside in the day. They often die of the disease.

## Where is white-nose syndrome?

The fungus that causes WNS has spread quickly across North America, affecting bats in all Canadian provinces. For the latest map, visit:  
[www.whitenosesyndrome.org/where-is-white-nose-syndrome](http://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/where-is-white-nose-syndrome)

In the NWT, white-nose syndrome was first detected in May 2026 near Fort Smith. The Government of the Northwest Territories is working on ways to support healthy bat populations and reduce the impact of this deadly bat disease.



- Check out [www.gov.nt.ca/bats](http://www.gov.nt.ca/bats)
- Email [WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca)
- Visit your **local ECC office**

## What can I do to help?

Help monitor the health of bats in the NWT. Guano (bat poop) and bats that are found dead are valuable for monitoring.

- Report or collect bats that are found dead, so they can be tested.
- Collect and submit guano for testing.
- Report bat observations, especially unusual bat behaviour.

You can also help **keep bats safe** from other kinds of harm. Healthy, resilient bat populations will be better able to deal with the effects of white-nose syndrome.

## If you find a dead bat

Be cautious if you find a bat—bats may appear to be dead when they are resting. Avoid handling a bat. If you must pick it up, wear thick leather gloves. Never use bare hands.

If you're sure it's dead, use a box or container to pick up the bat and seal it in a plastic bag. Include the location and date you found the bat, your name and contact information, and bring it to your local ECC office.

## Know of a bat roost? Send a sample!

Did you know you can contribute to WNS monitoring by collecting a sample of guano (bat poop)? Scan the link below to find out how.

Guide to  
managing bats  
in buildings

Click or scan



How to collect  
and submit  
guano (bat poop)



If you see a bat that is acting strangely or appears sick, **report it** to your local ECC office.

