

USFWS Update and Recommendations - Northern Long Eared Bat (NLEB)

June 2016 PRRIP Governance Committee Meeting

Background- The NLEB is a medium-sized bat with a body length of 3 to 3.7 inches and a wingspan of 9 to 10 inches. Their fur color can be medium to dark brown on the back and pale-brown on the underside. As its name suggests, this bat is distinguished by its long ears, particularly when compared to other bats in its genus. The bat spends winter hibernating in caves, mines and crevices in rock formations (hibernacula) and migrates in spring to summer roost habitat in cavities or crevices of trees where they give birth and raise a single pup during the spring and summer.

Status¹- Due to declines caused by white-nose syndrome (WNS) and continued spread of the disease, the bat was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on April 2, 2015. We also developed a final 4(d) rule, which published in the *Federal Register* on January 14, 2016. The 4(d) rule exempts certain activities from the take prohibition within the WNS zone.

PRRIP and the NLEB - The associated habitat reach (AHR) is within the range of the NLEB and white-nose syndrome buffer zone [see attached WNS Buffer Zone Map]. While no known hibernacula (caves) are within the AHR, summer maternity roost habitat exists and impacts to this type of habitat **while the bats are present** could result in incidental take.

Service Guidance and Recommendations² - Incidental take from tree removal activities is not prohibited unless it results from removing a known occupied maternity roost tree or from tree removal activities within 150 feet of a known occupied maternity roost tree from June 1 through July 31 or results from tree removal activities within 0.25 mile of a hibernaculum at any time. The federal agency can rely upon the finding of the programmatic biological opinion for the final 4(d) rule to fulfill their project-specific section 7 responsibilities if they use the framework described below. This framework is optional, if the federal agency chooses not to follow the framework, standard section 7 consultation procedures apply.

Given that there are no previously documented hibernacula in the AHR, take can be avoided by adopting this conservation measure, thereby avoiding tree removal activities from June 1-July 31. The Service recommends the Governance Committee of the PRRIP formally adopt this conservation measure.



¹ <http://www.fws.gov/Midwest/endangered/mammals/nleb/index.html>

² http://www.fws.gov/Midwest/endangered/mammals/nleb/pdf/KeyFinal4dNLEB_FedAgencies17Feb2016.pdf



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Northern Long-Eared Bat Final 4(d) Rule

White-Nose Syndrome Zone Around WNS/Pd Positive Counties/Districts

