

The importance of bat conservation

CONTRIBUTED

In June 2016, a large colony of bats was discovered in Western Nova Scotia, offering a glimmer of hope after an estimated 95 per cent decline of the Nova Scotia bat population since 2011. This group of roughly 350 healthy female bats and their young is the largest known maternity colony in the province. The Mersey Tobetate Research Institute (MTRI) and Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (NSDNR) have continued to monitor this group of bats, but they need your help documenting sightings and roost locations.

The culprit of the dramatic decline of bats is due to a fungus called white-nose syndrome. A fungus that has decimated populations in eastern North America and is working its way west each year. The deadly disease is spread easily among bats because they tend to hibernate in large groups within caves. When affected, the fungus rouses the bats from hibernation and depletes their fat stores, causing them to die.

"We need people to report observations of bats each time one is seen, especially repeat sightings in an area and potential roost sites. Reporting your bat sightings provides significant information on the bats remaining in the province. These healthy individuals are the basis for potential recovery in the future," says Lori Phinney, Mersey Tobetate Research Institute.

Since 2013, MTRI and NSDNR have operated the Bat Reporting hotline 1-866-727-3447 and www.batconservation.ca, the provincial reporting site for bat observations. So far Nova Scotians have contributed 2,850 sightings of bats in our years, including significant



MTRI student interns conducting a visual count of the bats at the largest maternity colony in the province.

Jason Headley



can eat up to 1,000 insects in an hour, acting as a control for some of the most damaging agricultural pests. They are also one of the world's longest-lived mammals for its size, with life spans up to 40 years.

In 2017, MTRI will be using acoustic monitoring technology to monitor bats throughout Western Nova Scotia to revisit sites that were monitored before white nose

IN THE MATTER OF: The Nova Scotia Companies Act, R.S.N.S. 1989, c.81
- and -

IN THE MATTER OF: The application of LIN-DOO INVESTMENTS LIMITED to surrender its certificate of incorporation

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