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# Michigan bats could be considered endangered because of white nose syndrome

By [Lester Graham](#) • 23 hours ago

A northern long-eared bat.  
Credit Al Hicks / USFWS

White nose syndrome has killed millions of bats in the U.S. since the fungal infection came here in the early 2000's. Some kinds of bats have been hit harder than others.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined the northern long-eared bat was threatened rather than endangered even though about 99% of the bats in its primary living area died.

The agency said 40% of the bat's range, including Michigan, was not as severely affected and did not expect the infection to spread quickly enough to threaten extinction.

"Unfortunately, that prediction was far too optimistic. And at this point, white nose syndrome has spread effectively throughout the entirety of the northern long-eared bat's range, including in Michigan. And so it is a real threat there as well," said Ryan Shannon with the Center for Biological Diversity.

A federal judge has ordered the Fish and Wildlife Service to take another look after environmental groups sued.

Shannon said if the Fish and Wildlife Service determines the bat is endangered, industries like timber harvesting could be affected.

“They’re going to have to take measures to minimize and mitigate their impacts so that if they want to proceed with those activities within the bat’s range that will have impact on the bat,” he noted.

A federal judge is ordering the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to speed up a decision on whether to label the northern long-eared bat as endangered.