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News & Notes

Founder's Circle Ecotour

Explore the bats and wildlife of Trinidad with Nina Fascione

The BCI Founder's Circle Ecotour to Trinidad in January was so popular that we added a second nine-day trip to the Caribbean island this May. And as a major bonus, BCI's new Executive Director, Nina Fascione, is excited to be joining this memorable trip to a beautiful land filled with exotic wildlife.

This picturesque island is home to an incredibly diverse collection of more than 70 bat species. The endlessly fascinating bats of Trinidad include fishing bats, tent-making species, omnivorous and carnivorous bats and all three species of vampire bats, plus some of the largest bats in the Americas.

We'll visit important bat roosts and also capture bats in mist nets and harp traps. The island wildlife is famous for its 463 species of birds, as well as a huge array of unusual reptiles and amphibians and such mammals as monkeys, ocelots and tree porcupines.

Renowned naturalist, author and illustrator Fiona Reid will lead this May 1-9, 2010, ecotour. The cost of \$5,950 includes accommodations at the comfortable Asa Wright Nature Centre & Lodge, where a medley of wildlife wanders the grounds.

Space is extremely limited. Contact Dianne Odegard at dodegard@batcon.org or (512) 663-6936 for more information and to reserve your place.

BCI's new White-nose Syndrome newsletter puts the latest news and research at your fingertips

If you want to know what scientists and wildlife managers are learning and doing about White-nose Syndrome, the devastating disease that has killed more than 1 million American bats and threatens bat populations throughout North America, you'll find it online from BCI.


Mylea Bayless, Bat Conservation International's WNS Coordinator, is compiling all the latest WNS research results, meeting updates and latest news from around the country into an online newsletter called WNSBriefing. It's posted on BCI's website (at www.batcon.org/wns) and updated regularly. Check the WNSBriefing frequently and stay on top of the bat community's monumental efforts to defeat this scourge.

Here's a brief sampling of reports from the current WNSBriefing:

Research

The characteristic white fungus that gave White-nose Syndrome its name has been identified as *Geomyces destructans* and is newly described to science in a paper titled "Geomyces destructans sp. nov. associated with bat white-nose syndrome" by A. Gargas,



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M.T. Trest, M.Christensen, T.J. Volk and D.S. Blehert. It was published in Mycotaxon, April-June 2009.

WNS mortality rates vary among affected species: The New York Department of Environmental Conservation reports that WNS-associated mortality varied among the six affected species. Species declines through 2009 ranged from 49 percent (big brown bats) to 93 percent (little brown myotis and eastern small-footed myotis).

Procedures for microscopic tissue study to confirm WNS are detailed in a paper, "Histopathologic criteria to confirm white-nose syndrome in bats," by Carol Uphoff Meteyer, Elizabeth L. Buckles, David S. Blehert, Alan C. Hicks, D. Earl Green, Valerie Shearn-Bochsler, Nancy J. Thomas, Andrea Gargas and Melissa J. Behr. It was published in the Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation, 21:411-414 (July 1, 2009).

Protocols

Guidelines for assessing wing damage have been developed by Jonathan D. Reichard and Thomas H. Kunz of the Center for Ecology and Conservation Biology at Boston University. A large proportion of bats leaving WNS-affected hibernacula exhibit varying degrees of scarring, necrosis and atrophy of flight membranes. Reichard's Wing Damage Index provides a consistent method for assessing damage in captured animals. (Read more at www.fws.gov/northeast/wnsresearchmonitoring.html.)

Other News

The U.S. Congress has approved \$1.9 million for WNS: The federal funding is allocated for efforts to identify the cause and seek solutions to White-nose Syndrome. The funds, included in the final version of the 2010 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill, mark a dramatic increase from the initial allocation of just \$500,000 for monitoring affected bat populations.

Meeting Updates

2009 WNS Symposium: Hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 72 representatives of federal and state agencies, universities and nongovernment organizations met to advance WNS research and management through communication, facilitated discussion and collaboration. More information can be found at www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html.

Help us fight White-nose Syndrome.

Donate now to Bat Conservation International's

WNS?Emergency Response Fund at www.batcon.org/wnsdonate

The Passing of Friends: Andy Linehan

Andy Linehan, a champion of bats and other wildlife within the wind-power industry and a driving force in the Bats and Wind Energy Cooperative, died in January 2010. He was 54. "Andy was a leader in environmental stewardship for the wind industry, and the Bats and Wind Energy Cooperative (BWEC) could not possibly have advanced so quickly and effectively without his support for independent research on wind and bat issues," said BCI Wind Energy Coordinator Ed Arnett.

Andrew O'Brien Linehan was born in Paris in 1955 to a U.S. Foreign Service officer. He grew up in Canada, Australia, Liberia, Ghana and Sierra Leone, as well as Washington, D.C. Andy earned a master's degree in urban and regional planning at Princeton University and worked with the Peace Corps, the federal Bonneville Power Administration and the engineering firm CH2MHill before joining PPM Energy (since purchased by Iberdrola Renewables) as director of wind-project permitting.

He was a founding board member of the American Wind and Wildlife Institute. He was appointed, with Arnett and several others, to a federal advisory committee that is preparing recommendations to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for limiting wind energy's impact on wildlife.

"Andy was the primary champion responsible for making our curtailment research happen in the U.S., and he went out on a limb to do so while others refused," said Arnett. This now well-documented strategy reduces bat fatalities by shutting down wind turbines on certain low-wind nights.

The American Wind Energy Association has established the Andrew Linehan Award for Environmental Excellence. This annual award will recognize individuals in the wind industry "who contribute to the responsible siting and permitting of individual projects, who tackle wildlife issues proactively and who work to establish and advance, as Andy did, the highest environmental standards for the industry."

Take to the Field at a BCI Workshop

BCI field workshops offer a uniquely exciting way to sharpen your bat-research skills and learn new ones by netting, examining and identifying bats of varied species under the guidance of veteran professionals. The 2010 schedule for the six-day, five-night workshops features sessions in Arizona, California and Pennsylvania. The number of openings for each workshop is very limited, so sign up now.

These popular workshops are designed for biologists, wildlife and land managers, educators, consultants and, of course, for any serious bat aficionado.

More than 1,500 participants from around the United States, Canada and 21 other nations have attended BCI workshops since 1991. Many used their workshop experience to help them become leaders in bat research and conservation.

Because of the threat of White-nose Syndrome, participants at all BCI workshops will learn and strictly follow approved A-decontamination guidelines throughout each session.

The Bat Conservation and Management Workshops blend lectures, discussions and field trips with hands-on experience using mist nets, harp traps, radiotracking gear and bat detectors. BCI biologists, local colleagues and regional experts, each working with five or fewer students, teach advanced capture A-techniques, safe and humane bat-handling and species identiA-fication. Lectures cover habitat assessment, conservation challenges, management, conflict resolution and much more.

Acoustic Monitoring Workshop

California: August 5-10

BCI's Acoustic Monitoring Workshop at Lava Beds National Monument in northern California provides direct experience with cutting-edge technologies. Working with key software developers Chris Corben (AnaBat/AnaLook) and Joe Szewczak (SonoBat), students learn techniques for collecting, recording and analyzing bat calls in the field. This session covers heterodyne, frequency-division, time-expansion and direct-recording techniques, as well as the design of effective acoustic-inventory projects.

Bat Conservation and Management

Workshops

Arizona: May 28-June 2 and June 3-8

Arizona's Chiricahua Mountains, where landscapes range from deserts to high-country forests, offer a biodiversity unequaled anywhere else in North America. You can expect to capture and examine as many as 18 bat species. Then you can watch endangered lesser long-nosed bats visit hummingbird feeders outside the door of your lodging at the American Museum of Natural History's famous Southwestern Research Station.

California: July 30-August 4

The unique lava formations of Lava Beds National Monument in northern California offer an outstanding opportunity to understand how varied cave environments affect where bats roost. Mist nets and harp traps set at cave entrances, over water resources, wet meadows and in mixed-pine forests should provide bats of up to 14 species, including Townsend's big-eared bat, for identification and observation in this dramatic landscape.

Pennsylvania: August 27-September 1

Bats and people have long shared the rolling farmlands of central Pennsylvania, a leading center of artificial-roost development. This workshop includes a focus on resolving bat/human conflicts, as well as an examination of White-nose Syndrome. Bats here have colonized many barns, attics and abandoned structures. We will visit an old church that's a sanctuary for 20,000 little brown myotis. Netting over trout streams and beaver ponds, we will examine bats of up to eight species.

Fees of \$1,395 per person for the Bat Conservation and Management workshops and \$1,595 for the Acoustic Monitoring Workshop cover course materials, food, lodging and all transportation in the field. Applicants must make their own travel arrangements to and from the workshop site.

An Endangered Candidate

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is formally citing the Florida bonneted bat as a candidate for the Endangered Species List. The agency said the species (*Eumops floridanus*) appears to number only a few hundred individuals, all of them in South Florida.

Candidate species receive no special protection, but conservation is strongly encouraged. As priorities permit and more information is gathered, the species could be formally considered for listing under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

Four U.S. bat species “ plus three subspecies ” are currently listed as endangered. The species are the gray and Indiana myotis, lesser long-nosed bat and Mexican long-nosed bat.

This Florida bonneted bat (formerly known as Wagner's mastiff bat) is the largest of Florida's bats, with a wingspan of up to 18¾ inches (47.6 centimeters). Florida bonneted bats don't migrate and roost in tree hollows, as well as in buildings, under Spanish-tile roofs, in dead palm fronds and bat houses. Fast and agile, they hunt a variety of night-flying insects over open spaces.

The species faces an array of threats, including intentional persecution and inadvertent disturbance by humans in populated areas. Loss of foraging habitat and both natural and manmade roost sites are constant risks. U.S. Fish and Wildlife says Florida bonneted bats are confirmed in only 12 locations, so the loss of any site could be catastrophic.

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