

BAT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

White-nose Syndrome hits Maine, But National Meeting Offers Some Hope

May 24, 2011 (Austin, TX) – White-nose Syndrome (WNS) has spread to Maine, the state Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife announced today. The bats, which showed signs of the WNS fungus on their faces and wings, were discovered at two different sites in Oxford County, and the disease was confirmed by laboratory tests. Maine is the fifth new state to report the disease this spring. Nineteen states and four Canadian provinces now face this devastating wildlife disease or its associated fungus.

“This news is sad, particularly following a week of progress at the WNS Symposium just last week,” said Nina Fascione, Executive Director of Bat Conservation International.

On May 16, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released the national White-Nose Syndrome response plan at the fourth annual White-nose Syndrome Symposium. The plan aims to promote collaboration between federal and state agencies, and provides an overall strategy for investigating the cause of WNS and minimizing its spread. Bat experts attending the symposium immediately began discussions for implementing the plan and moving forward.

“We are encouraged by the National Plan,” said Fascione. “However, the plan will only help if funding is supplied to implement it. I hope the federal monies allocated for this important wildlife issue will survive federal budget cuts.”

Nina Fascione is available for interview. Please contact Ashley Fuller at 512-327-9721 x25 to schedule.

For additional information about the above findings, go to
http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?topic=IFW_News&id=247640&v=article.

***Bat Conservation International (BCI)** is devoted to conserving the world's bats and their ecosystems in order to ensure a healthy planet. Founded in 1982, the organization has achieved unprecedented progress by emphasizing sustainable uses of natural resources that benefit both bats and people.*