

Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*



The northern long-eared bat (NLEB) was once a commonly found species in the Appalachians. Its native range is from Montana to Maine and Canada to Louisiana. The NLEB was listed in 2015 by the US Fish & Wildlife Service as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Threatened species are animals and plants that are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) information, White-nose Syndrome is the major threat to the species. White-nose Syndrome is a disease that mostly affects bats during the winter hibernation period while they are in their hibernacula (caves, abandoned mine portals, rock crevices, etc.). Actions have been taken to try to reduce or slow the spread of White-nose Syndrome through human transmission of the fungus into caves (e.g. cave and mine closures and advisories; national decontamination protocols). A national plan was prepared by the Service and other state and federal agencies that details actions needed to investigate and manage White-nose Syndrome. Many state and federal agencies, universities and non-governmental organizations are researching this disease to try to control its spread and address its effect on bats.

Based on guidance information provided by the USFWS, DMME's Division of Mine Land Reclamation and Virginia's coal industry are taking steps to reduce and offset any potential impacts to the remaining NLEB populations located within the Virginia coalfields. One major strategy being implemented is voluntarily stopping any tree clearing activity within 150 feet radius of a known NLEB maternal roost tree (a tree in which the female bats have their young) or within 0.25 mile radius of a known NLEB habitat a certain time of year. The Virginia Coal Industry is also actively reforesting disturbed mine lands to create additional potential NLEB habitats.