

# White-nose Syndrome Communications Outreach Campaign

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**Collaborators:** Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
**Duration:** June 2010 to June 2011  
**Funding Source(s):** Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Endangered Species  
**Goals and Objectives:**

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The goal of the communications and outreach campaign is to inform target audiences of white-nose syndrome (WNS) in bats and its rapid spread toward Iowa, and to gain cooperation from Iowa cavers and others to take precautions to minimize the potential to spread disease from one cave or bat population to another, with an ultimate goal of keeping white-nose syndrome from decimating Iowa's cave bat populations and their associated hibernacula.

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- Inform public and private cave owners about WNS and gain their cooperation in taking actions to monitor their bat populations for evidence of the disease and to slow the spread of the disease.
  - Inform veterinarians, public health departments and wildlife rehabilitators about WNS in bats, ongoing research and techniques being used to treat the syndrome, and actions to reduce the spread of the disease.
  - Inform pest control operators of WNS, its identification, how and to whom to report incidences or suspected incidences of the disease, and actions to reduce the spread of the disease.
  - Inform interested citizens/individuals about white-nose syndrome in bats and actions that they can take to reduce the spread of the disease among populations.

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## Progress:

Kelly Siebert worked with us on this project as a part of her honors project. With her assistance, we developed Web site content for posting on the Iowa DNR Web site (<http://www.iowadnr.gov/IDNRSearchResults.aspx?q=white-nose%20syndrome>). These materials were submitted and reviewed by Iowa DNR and US Fish and Wildlife Service. We produced a Powerpoint presentation and accompanying script for use by wildlife professionals and naturalists. We surveyed wildlife rehabilitators, veterinarians and nuisance wildlife control operators, regarding their awareness and knowledge of white-nose syndrome, and provided each audience with information pertaining to white-nose syndrome and what to do with a suspected case of white-nose syndrome, as well as how to minimize inadvertent spread of the disease. We produced a brochure about white-nose syndrome for these audiences and for people visiting areas in which bats reside in Iowa, particularly cave areas along the Mississippi River. These brochures are available for interested individuals who visit these sites. We conducted educational workshops about white-nose syndrome for County Conservation Board naturalists and for County and campus-based Extension personnel. We provided programs about white-nose syndrome to the Big Bluestem Audubon Society, Ames, Iowa and the Ames Anglers. We produced a voice-over Powerpoint for interested individuals available at <http://www.ncrac.org/fl-gal/whitenose/index.htm>. We designed WNS informational signs for posting at known hibernation sites for bats in Iowa. Kelly Siebert participated in a poster presentation of her work on the project during Spring 2011 at Iowa State University. We submitted our final report on the project to Iowa Department of Natural Resources in summer 2011.

## Conclusions and Recommendations:

Many opportunities have presented themselves to continue this educational outreach campaign aimed at stopping the human-mediated spread of white-nose syndrome. One such opportunity is the invitation to share the final white-nose syndrome Powerpoint presentation with Rich Geboy of US Fish & Wildlife Service for posting on the US Fish & Wildlife Service white nose syndrome website. It is also posted on the white-nose syndrome page of the WildTracks website (<http://wildtracks.nrem.iastate.edu>) for viewing by interested individuals. A voice-over Powerpoint presentation is also available on this same page. Additional opportunities to present workshops for naturalists, nuisance wildlife control operators, wildlife rehabilitators and others will continue to be pursued, as well as distributing materials and presenting programs on white-nose syndrome to various audiences.