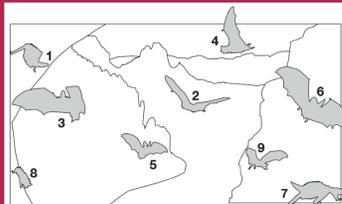


# Bats of Western Forests



Thirty-four species of bats live in forests of the western U.S., each playing a unique role in forest health. They consume vast numbers of insects, including pests from moths and beetles to mosquitoes. In the southwest, three species are also ecologically valuable as pollinators and seed dispersers. Nevertheless, these vital allies rank among America's most rapidly declining wildlife. When mature forests are replaced by plantations of a single age or species of tree, or by large wildfires, which have been increasing in size, frequency, and intensity, it deprives bats of the roosting cavities provided by old trees and snags. A new threat has recently emerged, White-nose Syndrome (WNS), a disease lethal to bats that hibernate in cool caves and old mines. WNS has spread rapidly across most of the eastern U.S. and Canada, killing millions of bats. In 2016, WNS was confirmed in the State of Washington. Within a forest, each bat species has different habitat needs. Many form summer colonies beneath loose bark or in cavities created by lightning strikes, woodpeckers, decay or fires. 1 Spotted bats (*Euderma maculatum*) and 2 hoary bats (*Lasiurus cinereus*) feed mostly on moths in forest clearings, the former roosting in cliff-face crevices, the latter in tree foliage. 3 Little brown myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*) form summer roosts in tree cavities and beneath loose bark. They hunt a wide variety of insects, including mayflies and mosquitoes, feeding mostly over or near lakes and rivers. 4 Mexican free-tailed bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) roost primarily in caves and abandoned mines and feed high above the forest canopy on moths, beetles and other insects. 5 Townsend's big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) and 6 California leaf-nosed bats (*Macrotus californicus*) also live in caves and old mines but feed below the forest canopy or along the edge of forest stands and desert washes, often plucking moths, crickets and other prey directly from foliage. 7 Pallid bats (*Antrozous pallidus*) occupy a variety of roosts, often catching crickets, scorpions and centipedes from the ground. 8 Tiny canyon bats (*Parastrellus hesperus*) emerge from rock crevices at dusk, chasing small insects above and throughout the forest. 9 Endangered lesser long-nosed bats (*Leptonycteris yerbabuena*) are cave-dwellers and key pollinators and seed dispersers of agave and columnar cacti. To survive winter, some western bats migrate south or to lower elevations, while others hibernate in caves, old mines, or deep rock crevices. Healthy forests need bats, and bats need healthy forests.

For more information about bats, contact Bat Conservation International at (512) 327-9721, or log on to our Web site at [www.batcon.org](http://www.batcon.org). ©2000 Bat Conservation International. All rights reserved.

