

CBWG Meeting Minutes
16 October 2009, 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Attendees

Lea' Bonewell - USGS
Donald Solick – West Inc.
Jeremy Siemers - CNHP
Dan Neubaum - CDOW
Tom Hanson – CDOW BIMP
Apple Snider – USFS (Steamboat)
Amy Englert – CDOW BIMP
Lance Carpenter - CDOW
Paul Cryan - USGS
Mike Sherman - CDOW
Michael Painter – USFS (S. Platte Ranger Dist, Pike Nat For, Morrison)
Robin Sell - BLM
Missy Siders - BLM
Ron Spears – Mactel Engineering (Centennial)
Cyndi Mosch – Cave Resources
John Burghardt - NPS
Kevin Castle – NPS?
Jason Corbett – BCI (Tucson) 520-488-9926, jcorbett@batcon.org
Cathy Estes – Rehab (Conifer)
Toni Piaggio – USDA APHIS
Laura Ellison - USGS
Randy Ghormley – USFS
Laura Archuleta – FWS (Saguache)
Jerry Stimpson – CDOW BIMP
Kristen Philbrook - USFS
Kirk Navo – CDOW
Rob Schorr - CNHP

White Nose Syndrome (WNS) - Paul

45 species, 7 endangered, 20 Category-2 species
Slight natural history – longevity, etc.
Estimated losses exceed one Million bats over past 3 years
Annual number of insects 694 tons
06/07 unusual behavior – 5 caves/mines
Early 07 thousands of dead bats
1st – Feb 06 – Hal? Cave
Spread to 33 sites – mortality 10s of thousands estimated
900 km spread from where 1st observed
>80% colony declines
Eg., Indiana bats – 10% of winter populations impacted
VA big-eared bats this spring
1.5 million in only 8 caves hibernating – Gray bats

14 sp of hibernating species occurring west of Great Plains

Questions that shape USGS research – disease investigation,

Starvation=death

Precedent – banding resulted in mass deaths

Fungus – underlying compromised immune systems

Found unknown and unidentified fungus species

Requires cold for growth, common on sick bats, new species – *Geomyces destructans*

Transmission study at NWHC – infects healthy bats! Some aerosol transmission

Creating new tools to find fungi

Sampled soil – this fungus not in caves not effected by bat mortality

Europe – found in Europe, but no mortality observed – invasive species?

How does it work?

6 species affected

At least 25 in US hibernate

Every week or 2 usually arouse to do normal functions

Hibernacula surveillance – Dave Dalton in AZ contracted – TN site – difficult conditions for equipment

What should we do?

FWS spent \$3.5M and this year allocated \$500K to FWS

Congress has heard, but isn't funding well

Ideas list of solutions/prevention

Research spectrum

USGS – Disease dynamics

Control and mitigation techniques

Population impacts

Lots of people working together to try to resolve

Never seen diseases in bats killing them like this, never seen mass deaths like this – unprecedented

Body conditions of bats coming to hibernacula – seem to have less body fat...

Comparable to Chytrid fungus in anurans – going on (populations crashed in 1960's) and recently figured out – recent to enact decontamination protocols. With WNS, we can get ahead now.

Lots of interest now in disease issues in bats – high immunity to disease – encroaching on bat habitat results in transmission of disease

Toni

VA big-eared bats – working on protocols

Looking at genetic diversity in VA vs other big-eared bats
WBWG guidelines for summer decontamination of permitted work – Colorado discussion
WBWG will gather feedback from states about protocols and revise as needed
Keep open to research on bat diseases – easy to resist, but need to be open
WBWG sign pdf that can be made and installed at mines/caves

Kirk

Colorado protocols/guidelines – our role/function as CBWG, permits
Mid-July Colorado conf call with CBWG members – Pat Ormsbee part of call
CDOW committee – to get started – agency reps, WL health lab (Paul Davies), caving community, other reps
Last month conf call with committee
Discussion of protocols, inconveniences, etc.
Minimize use of harp traps, decontaminate between uses, clean bags, clean mist nets, etc...
Chemicals to use still being worked out
Sparquat solution for Chytrid fungus – DOW using for waders

Kevin

10% bleach (best), diluted Lysol, 409 – use proper dilution
Cleaning off dirt, etc. because can't get decontamination agent under the dirt & be effective

John B - Protocols added to contracts from stimulus funds

Paul - One form of contamination – bat to bat; another – person caused by equipment contamination

Rob - Implement in stages, along with education – figure out our level of risk now

Recommendations to go to the committee:

Bat handling and processing

One bat per bag – then clean or dispose of

Hold bats for a minimal time

Discussion of wing damage documentation – not a requirement, biologists were using as a guide where WNS is

Decontaminate equipment

Clean or use new between sites – equipment – hard and porous materials, including self, vehicle, etc

Use a salad spinner to help dry out washed net in the field

Toni to check into how things have gone in other areas, esp. OR bat grid

Dan – clean net if nearby site next night?

Rob volunteering to send out reminders to CBWG members about WNS feedback (how the protocols worked in the field for them, etc)

Kirk giving input to WBWG from CO to WNS committee about feedback

BCI - Jason – hibernacula monitoring going on? Kirk – have sites, just need to figure out how to implement. Jason – has funding for research, etc. Area includes TX, NM, CO, CA, AZ, NV, UT (could expand from SW to W)

BCI - SE rare bats person, now WNS – Malia

Misc

Bat plan started in 1995 and out in 2003, pre-WNS and pre-Wind energy

Matrix - Jeremy

Kirk concern about management aspect vs research needs (academia) aspect vs funding justifications – management standpoint focus for matrix

Who is using the Bat Plan?

Discussion of matrix – colors (a lot of green), perhaps use blue, who would see it, etc

Decision to change green to blue or similar color other than green

Meet face-to-face for bat matrix finalization – Jan/Feb09 timeframe

Rob – to test, could send out to someone independent

Other

Mine withdrawal in place now – discussion
Send Kirk article about mine withdrawal

BIMP

Got into field in July with techs and volunteers
Meetings with agency leadership, then partners
Kirk may not be coordinator next year

NASBR in Denver next year

Rob - CBWG role?

Kirk – meet once a year, exchange info, small tasks. Unless we meet more than once a year with committees. Toni – WBWG – action plan drove organization and got a lot accomplished.

Cooperative of agencies providing small amounts of funding to grad students for research – use CBWG as central organization. Rob will send paper out about how the NW region did it.

Bat blitz

Laura – Ouray National Wildlife Refuge, NW Utah near Dinosaur National Monument – June, July, August