

Five-Year Status Review/Endangered Species Act: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Notice of Initiation for Northern Long-Eared Bat



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The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (“Service”) announced on December 23rd in a Federal Register Notice that it initiated a status review for the Northern Long-Eared Bat (“long-eared bat”) under the Endangered Species Act (“ESA”). See 85 Fed. Reg. 83993.

The long-eared bat’s range includes a portion of the State of Arkansas.

Pursuant to the ESA, codified at 16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq., the Service maintains lists of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants (collectively referred to as “the List”). The Service maintains the List in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, 50 C.F.R. 17.11 (for animals) and 50 C.F.R. 17.12 (for plants). The ESA requires the Service to review each listed species at least once every five years.

The long-eared bat was listed by the Service as “threatened” on April 2, 2015.

The Service’s 5-year status review considers all new information available at the time of the review. In conducting the review, the Service considers specifically the best scientific and commercial data that have become available since the listing determination or most recent status review. Such data typically includes:

1. Species biology, including but not limited to population trends, distribution, abundance, demographics and genetics;
2. Habitat conditions, including but not limited to amount, distribution, and suitability;
3. Conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species;
4. Threat status and trends in relation to the five listing factors (as defined in Section 4(a)(1) of the ESA); and
5. Other new information, data, or corrections, included but not limited to taxonomic and nomenclature changes, identification of erroneous information contained in the List, and improved analytical methods.

The long-eared bat is one of the species of bats that has been impacted by the disease white-nose syndrome. It was listed as threatened due to declines caused by this syndrome and continued spread of the disease in the long-eared bat. Long-eared bats spend winters hibernating in caves and mines. During

the summer they roost singly or in colonies underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of both live trees and snags.

The Conservation Fund noted in 2017 that bats are Arkansas's most endangered mammal. Examples of Arkansas efforts to preserve the species include the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission's ("ANHC") prior acquisition and protection of more than 500 acres in northern Arkansas to benefit the habitats for both federally endangered and threatened species of bats. The acquisition included 400 acres in Independence County in the Foushee Cave Natural Area. Also, an additional 101 acres has been protected by the ANHC at Slippery Hollow in Marion County.

The Service is requesting any new information regarding the long-eared bat.

A copy of the Federal Register Notice can be downloaded [here](#).