

Dear Bat-Conservationists,

As most of you might have heard already, within the last few years there have been dramatic population declines in bat hibernacula in the north-eastern USA. A large number of animals had lost their weight, but others remained in good body condition. The most important feature is white fungal growth around the muzzle, often the wing membranes are also affected (image below). Because of the “white nose” this phenomenon is called „White Nose Syndrome (WNS)“.



from: Blehert et al., Science, 2009

Since last winter season we know that similar fungal growth does appear on European bat species – apparently in some countries noted for over 20 years. A few people were able to retrieve samples from these bats and examination of the fungus was performed in Dublin/Ireland and Berlin/Germany. During the last Bat conference in Berlin, it was agreed that more information is needed on the true distribution of the fungus. Therefore, we would like to ask you for your help to extend the current knowledge. If possible please try also to pay particular attention on the climate condition within the hibernacula – there are no data of temperature and humidity. If possible, please, try to measure these parameters in close proximity to the animal suspicious for carrying the fungus.

Attached you will find a protocol sheet and sampling methods. If you should encounter such an animal, please, print out the protocol sheet and fill in the necessary details and send it to one of the addresses below.

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Thank you very much for your cooperation and your kind efforts!

**Protocol sheet for Investigations of Bats in Hibernacula
With Suspect of „White Nose-Syndrome“-like Lesions**

Bat species: _____

Identification (banding-No. etc): _____

Age: juvenile / adult **Sex:** male / female **Body weight:** _____ g

Body condition: very good / good / moderate / bad / emaciated

Date: _____ **Outdoor Temperature:** _____

Location: _____

GPS-Position: _____

Cave:____ - Entrance area____; rear area____; height of animal's position:_____

Box:____ - height position of box:_____

Tree:____ - height position of hibernacula:_____

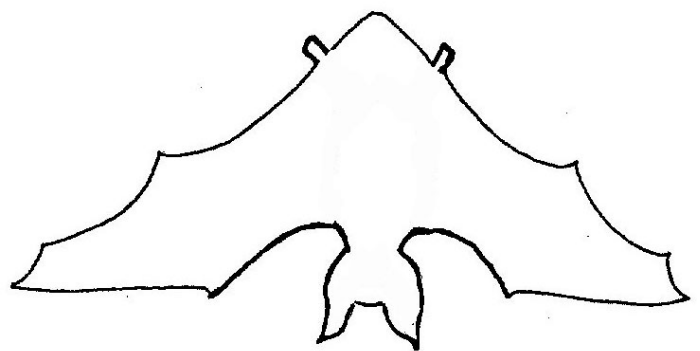
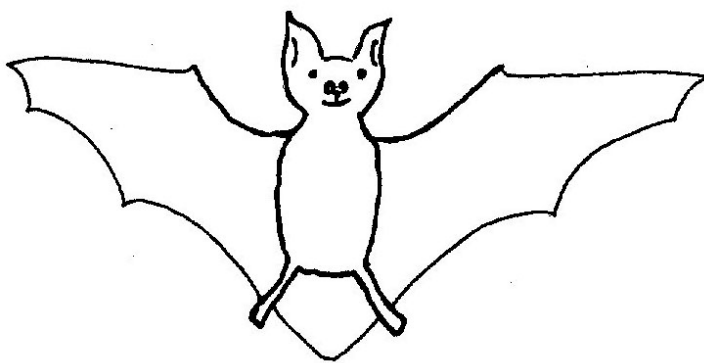
Temperature near animals position:_____ °C **Humidity** near animals position:_____

No. of individuals in hibernaculum: _____

No. of individuals with fungal growth: _____

Description of animals' lesions:

Localisation of fungal infection(s) (please mark in the sketch):



Appearance of lesion:

Colour: white:____; yellow:____; green-blue:____; dark grey:____; other: _____

Number of fungal patches: one ____; two ____; three ____; other _____

Size of the lesions: smallest:____ cm ; largest:____ cm

Photograph taken: yes ____; no ____

Sampling-Utensils

Single-use Latex gloves

Adhesive tape (clear + transparent!)

Glass slides (for microscopes)

If you should have any difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact us for advice!

Caution: Please use one pair of disposable gloves per animal to avoid cross contamination of fungal spores! Before entering caves it is recommended to wear rubber boots and overalls, which can be washed and exchanged between different sites to avoid passive transport of fungal spores with shoe soles or clothing.

Life Animals: Please wear single-use gloves!

(1) If possible – **before** sampling **take a photo** from the lesions.

(2) **Adhesive tape:** Make a loop with a strip of tape – adhesive side turned outside – and carefully approach the fungal lesion and 1-2x let superficial fungal structures adhere. Place adhesive tape onto a labelled glass slide or any transparent item you might have, where the tape could be peeled off from.

[4] Please send glass slide (shatter-proof!) + filled in protocol sheet via mail to one of the addresses below.

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