

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

New bats for endangered species list?

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

The spread of white-nose syndrome, the deadly bat disease, brings with it many questions, one of the most important, what will become of our bat populations?

Parts of the eastern United States have already seen dramatic die-offs in bat numbers. In response to white-nose syndrome, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which maintains the U.S. list of endangered species, has been asked to add two more bat species to that list.

One of those is the Eastern small-footed bat, one of the smallest in North America weighing in at less than two pennies. Although they're found across much of the Eastern United States, their distribution is patchy, and most known populations are found from Virginia up to New York, an area significantly impacted by white nose syndrome.

The other is the northern long-eared bat. This species is found across much of the eastern and north central United States, but like the eastern small-footed, its distribution is patchy across that range. In the summer time the northern long-eared bat tends to be associated with old-growth forests with trees 100 years old or older.

Both of these bats are found in the Southern Appalachians, and indeed, both are known from sites where white-nose syndrome was recently found in North Carolina.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.