

Using Wildlife Action Plans to Strengthen Regional Bat Conservation Efforts

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Abstract: The state Wildlife Action Plans provide consolidated information for each state and territory and are a valuable resource for developing much-needed conservation partnerships and programs for natural resources. To better inform bat conservation efforts for the Southeastern region a review of the plans for the 16 Southeastern states was conducted. The goals of the review were to gain a better understanding of the status patterns and trends for priority bats for the region and to identify areas where multi-state and multi-species actions and programs may be developed that will enhance the outcomes for at-risk and imperiled bats. Collectively, over half of the 17 bats that occur widely in the Southeastern region are included in these plans as priority species. Nine species common to the majority of the plans were identified. Four of these are federally listed taxa; *Myotis grisescens*, *M. sodalis*, *Corynorhinus townsendii ingens*, and *C. t. virginianus*. Five others are featured in high priority categories: *Lasiurus intermedius*, *L. seminolus*, *M. austroriparius*, *M. leibii*, and *C. rafinesquii*. Common themes regarding threats include loss or degradation of roosting habitat. These include cave and rock features used by the four federally-listed bats and two of the species of concern (*M. leibii* and *C. rafinesquii*). Additionally, high-quality bottomland hardwood forest is listed as a forest type at risk in all plans. Priority bats in the region closely linked to this habitat are *L. intermedius*, *L. seminolus*, *M. austroriparius*, and *C. rafinesquii*. Partnerships targeting either rock features or bottomlands would enhance conservation efforts for multiple priority bat species in the Southeastern region.

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