



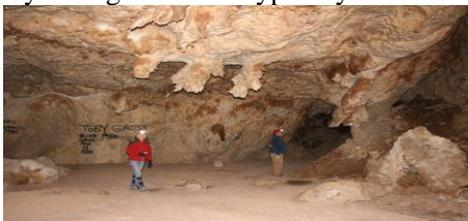
Bat Roost Habitat Assessment and Conservation Planning

Project # 11-142

Background:

There is a great need for military installations to determine the locations and types of bat roost habitat occupied or potentially available to bats. In New Mexico, 65% of bat species expected to occur on military installations are considered sensitive species by the state. Therefore, knowledge of roost locations is necessary to properly manage for these species and prevent federal listing that could impact the military mission. Bat Conservation International and DoD are partnering to identify and survey potential roost habitat at military installation sites throughout New Mexico. Results will be used to produce management recommendations that can be incorporated into each installation's INRMP. Management plans will include the location and types of roosts, bat species that use them, seasonal use, priorities for roost conservation, and recommendations for preventing the introduction or spread of White-nose Syndrome.

This project was developed from discussions in the DoD Southwest regional TER-S Workshop and in the DoD INRMP/SWAP Workshop in Albuquerque, and is being conducted in accordance with the 2006 MOU between DoD and Bat Conservation International. This project is coordinated with the NM Department of Game and Fish to ensure that conservation recommendations are consistent with the NM State Wildlife Action Plan and suitable for integration into each installation's INRMP. Work will be contracted to Bat Conservation International which has the technical expertise to assess bat roost habitat, especially in treacherous areas (such as mine shafts) to which military biologists do not typically have access.



Internal bat habitat surveys in a large cave on White Sands Missile Range, NM.

Objective:

Assess and survey potential bat roost habitat at military installations in New Mexico, summarize results, and determine priorities for management and conservation of roost sites that can then be integrated into each installation's Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP).

Summary of Approach:

Bat Conservation International continues to use existing AML, geological, and GIS databases to locate and survey subterranean features. New features located during surveys are documented and added to existing databases. All features will be internally surveyed, where it is safe to do so. Bat use will be determined in as much detail as possible, as well as roost characteristics. All data will be compiled into a custom database. Data will be analyzed and installation specific management plans will be created. A subset of suitable sites (mines) will be identified for use for training in subterranean warfare by members of our armed forces.

Benefit:

Each participating installation will receive survey results and management recommendations that can be incorporated into each installation's Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP), helping to fill information gaps and contribute to range sustainability and readiness. The process will serve as a model that other installations can use to assess and conserve its bat roost habitat. Because many species of bats are species of concern and/or state listed, the assessment and conservation of roost sites is intended to help prevent federal listing of any of these species that, if listed, could compromise the military mission. With a substantial increase in training and testing upcoming at installations in New Mexico, it is even more important to conserve these bat species to reduce the potential for future conflicts with missions. By identifying safety hazards, and establishing priorities for mine closures (should the need arise), this project also makes a positive contribution with respect to troop safety.

Accomplishments:

249 features across four installations were assessed in 2012 (479 features to date). A total of 11 significant roosts and 4 unknown caves have been located and surveyed to date. Recent surveys have located 5 new hibernacula, one of which is now the largest known on DoD lands in New Mexico. One presentation was given on the project at a meeting of the New Mexico Bat working Group at the Bosque del Apache NWR, NM.

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