



Bat hibernacula surveys

Credit: Shawn Thomas

A WDFW wildlife diversity grant project

Many Washington bat species hibernate in caves and abandoned mines to survive the cold season when food and water resources are extremely limited. Suitable habitat for hibernation is rare, and during hibernation, bats are extremely sensitive to disturbance. Given the important of bats to the ecosystem, it is critically important to identify and protect their winter roosts. This project surveys caves and abandoned mines to yield winter bat population data to inform habitat protection and management.



Credit: Shawn Thomas

Project name: Bat hibernacula surveys in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and North Cascades

Primary species benefitting: Townsend's big-eared and myotis bats

Grant total: \$56,789

Grantee & associated entity: Shawn Thomas, Bat Conservation International (BCI)

Webpage: batcon.org

Bat population counts, focusing on Townsend's big-eared bats and myotis bats, will occur at known hibernacula and previously unsurveyed sites in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and in the Okanogan region. Bats disperse across multiple roosts in their winter range, so a reliable population estimate requires searching potential roosts at a broad, landscape scale, along with consistent, recurring counts of known, significant hibernacula. BCI, through their expertise in hibernacula surveys, will add value and capacity to WDFW in this pursuit.



Credit: WDFW



Credit (left & right): Shawn Thomas

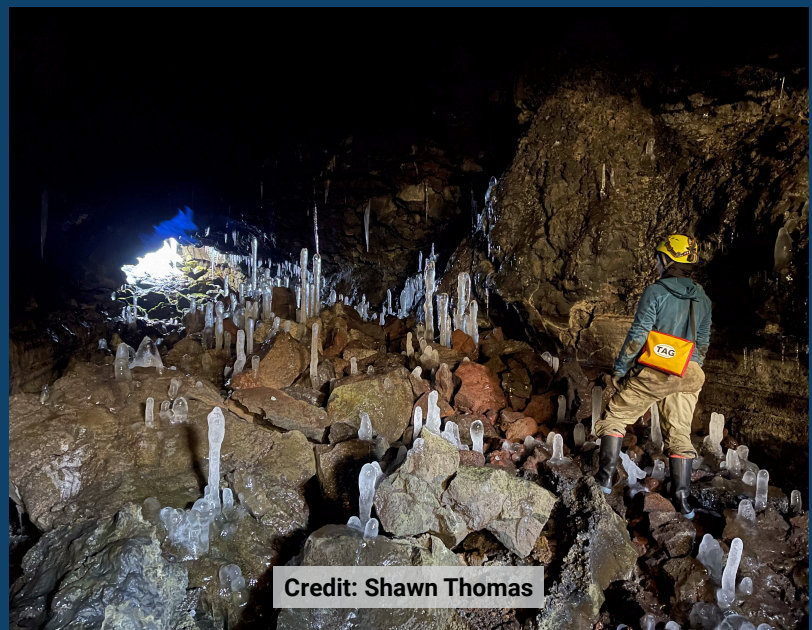
Project goals and outcomes

- Add capacity and technical expertise to WDFW and partner agencies to establish a robust, consistent, long-term monitoring program for assessing winter bat populations.
- Identify previously unknown significant winter bat habitat through expanded search areas and greater efforts.
- Contribute data and understanding of winter bat roosting preferences to aid in long-term habitat protection.

Improved data for conservation actions and land management

The mission of BCI's Subterranean Team is to protect subterranean bats and their habitat. Through this funding, the project will be able to investigate and identify important winter roosting habitat in Washington for Townsend's big-eared bats and other species.

Data from this project will better inform land managers on the status and distribution of winter bat habitat, with a specific focus on Townsend's big-eared bats and myotis species. This knowledge can guide land management and conservation actions aimed at long-term protection of important bat roosts.



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This project was funded by WDFW through the [Wildlife Diversity Grant Program](#).

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