

# Battling a bat killer

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Scientists are looking for answers -- including commercial bathroom disinfectants and over-the-counter fungicides used to fight athlete's foot -- to help in the battle against a strange fungus that threatens bat populations in the United States. That's the topic of an article in the current issue of Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN), ACS' weekly newsmagazine.

C&EN Senior Correspondent Stephen K. Ritter notes that despite their poor public image, bats are beneficial. They pollinate plants, spread seeds, and eat vast numbers of insects that otherwise could destroy food crops and carry human diseases.

Ritter describes a fast-spreading fungal disease called white-nose syndrome, named for its effects in discoloring the noses of infected bats.

The [fungus](#) has killed more than 1 million hibernating bats in caves and abandoned mines in the U.S. during the past four years, the worst die-off of wildlife in North American history. The fungus damages the bats' wings and causes restless behavior during winter months, making survival unlikely.

The article describes how scientists are struggling to understand the disease while trying to prevent it from spreading and discusses how scientists are seeking possible chemical solutions to eradicate the fungus without damaging the environment or harming healthy [bats](#).

**More information:** "Battling Bat Fungus" This story is available at

[pubs.acs.org/cen/science/88/8846sci1.html](https://pubs.acs.org/cen/science/88/8846sci1.html)

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