

# Bat with species-devastating fungus discovered in Colorado

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A bat infected with a fungus that has killed millions of bats across the country was found in Longmont last month.

Testing this month confirmed the little brown bat was infected with [white-nose syndrome](#)—a [deadly fungus](#) that could devastate Colorado's native bat populations. The bat found in Longmont is the second found with the syndrome in Colorado and biologists believe the dangerous affliction is spreading.

"While it is unfortunate to discover this deadly disease in a second Colorado bat species, Colorado Parks and Wildlife did anticipate that this would happen based on what has been documented in other states," Dan Neubaum, CPW Species Conservation Program Manager, said Tuesday in a news release.

A [wildlife](#) rehabber collected the infected bat on Feb. 29 after it was found crawling on a public bike path in Longmont. Its wings were brittle from severe dehydration, which prevented it from flying.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife collected the bat and sent [biological samples](#) to Colorado State University, which confirmed the bat had white-nose syndrome.

In mid-March, another bat in Boulder also tested positive for the fungus. State biologists believe the fungus is spreading in that area and that more infected [bats](#) will be found in the coming weeks. The fungus does not infect people or pets.

"The main mode of transport for this introduced fungus is from bat to bat, making it impossible to stop its spread in the wild," Parks and Wildlife staff said in a news release.

The first little brown bat in Colorado with white-nose syndrome was found near Bent's Old Fort near La Junta. While the fungus has been found in three of the species' summer roosts, the bats discovered in Boulder County are only the second and third with symptoms.

Biologists believe the fungus traveled from Europe to New York in 2006. It has since spread to more than 40 states and sickened 12 North American bat species. The fungus grows on bats' muzzles and wings during hibernation. Infected bats wake up from hibernation more frequently and use more energy, which results in starvation before spring arrives.

At least 13 of Colorado's 19 native bat species are susceptible to the disease, wildlife officials said.

"Any large-scale loss of bats could cause trouble for the health of Colorado's ecosystems and economy, given estimates that these voracious insect eaters contribute \$3 billion annually to the U.S. [agricultural economy](#) through pest control," they said in the news release.

To minimize the spread of the fungus, people should:

- Stay out of closed caves and mines.
- Decontaminate shoes and cloths worn while visiting caves.
- Report dead or sick bats to Colorado Parks and Wildlife by calling 303-291-7771.

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