

# Midwest Bat Working Group

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Louisville, KY

24 February 2011

Called to order 9:05 am by Rob Mies.

### **Rob Mies – Welcome and Introduction to MWBWG**

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting for this group. The first 2 meetings were held at Indiana State University (ISU) Bat Center in Terre Haute, IN.

John Whitaker & ISU Bat Center and others worked hard to bring this group together.

Since last May, Board of Directors (11 individuals) has:

- Created a logo – thanks to ISU Bat Center for helping us to develop that.
- Finalized a Mission Statement, which is posted on Website. We're still thinking about the things that we as a group want to focus on. The main points are: coordination, collaboration, and communication.
  - “As the primary predators of night-flying insects, bats are crucial to the ecology, economy, and health of our shared world ecosystem. The Midwest Bat Working Group (MWBWG) provides a structure for coordination, collaboration, and communication among concerned citizens and professional biologists in state, federal, academic, and private organizations. The MWBWG is dedicated to the conservation of bats and their habitats, particularly in the midwestern United States, and works to address bat-related issues with a regional approach. Although most participants are from Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin, membership is open to anyone who seeks to collaborate on research and management of bats or to promote conservation by enhancing public understanding of bats.”
- Website is up and running. It is still basic but we'll be adding links: [www.mwbwg.org](http://www.mwbwg.org)
- Listserv available (send Tim Carter or any board member an email to be added to the list)
  - Facilitate collaboration: regional projects. We're still working on this.
- 4<sup>th</sup> item (not expressly in mission statement) that we're interested in: Advocate (a lot of this can be done on our website), such as:
  - Regional/national priorities
  - Recommended projects
  - Communication Facilitator to keep different groups and agencies communicating with each other
  - Banding office – ISU currently helping coordinate
  - We reviewed and wrote a letter of support for Wisconsin Dept. Natural Resources' Emergency Bat Rules

### **Treasurer's Report – Brianne Walters**

- Current balance is \$3447.22
- 2011 Membership dues were \$907.12.
- There are 38 members: 33 professional and 5 student.

### **Board of Directors Vacancy**

- Open Board Position thru May 2012 (until next election), vice-Amy Halsall. Katrina Schultes has taken over as Secretary.
- Please send nominations to any board members.

### **Bylaws**

Bylaws are the rules and regulations enacted by an association to provide a framework for its operation and management. The Board of Directors is currently working on bylaws for MWBWG.

### **Membership – Tim Carter**

- Currently 38 members. Do not have to be a member to attend meetings.
- Working on ability to pay for memberships online. Can pay during meeting registration.
- We're seeking ideas for incentives to increase membership, to get more people involved and help them feel more a part of the organization, and to improve our success with mission goals. Examples are:
  - 10% discounts at Organization for Bat Conservation and Indiana State University Bat Center
  - Discount for annual meeting registration
  - Newsletter
- Dues are due each year, associated with the annual meeting.
- Fiscal year = calendar year.

### **WNS is newly confirmed in Indiana – Scott Johnson (IDNR)**

- State went into this winter intending to do regular censuses with Dr. Virgil Brack, ESI (25 years of data). Surveys in late January.
- 200-300 individuals were visibly-affected with fungus and additional *Myotis* tested PCR+.
- When tests come in, expect 3 sites in 2 counties, Crawford and Washington Counties to be confirmed, and Monroe Co. is suspect.
- Wyandott has beam-break technology, and they have been seeing daytime flights consistently, which have been increasing as winter progresses. A few bats have come back PCR+ and with visible fungus. Waiting on histopathology results. Also found dead bats at drip line at entrance. Observers did not enter the cave.
- Other sites seem to have only a few bats with visible fungus.
- Northern bats (MYSE) & little brown bats (MYLU) appear to be affected, and one pip (PESU) collected for testing.
- Twin Domes – Indiana bat (MYSO) with holes in wings and fungus on leg. They did a fungal tape sample, but so far PCR-. That is the only MYSO observed so far.

- Overall numbers not compiled yet; still looking at photographs. MYSO seemed to be OK at this point.
- Question: what is state response? Answer: Trying to find out extent of WNS in IN. Next year may do formal censuses where they did not do it this year. Monitoring to figure out how widespread WNS is. They don't have firm plans on what to do past this winter.
- Question: Does IN have a WNS Response Plan – how to proceed this summer, etc.? Answer: No written document yet, but one is being formulated, possibly by end of season.
- Steve Harriss did some cave surveys on the Hoosier National Forest in IN. MYLU in cave in Orange Co. looked like classic WNS fungus, but tests are not back yet.

### Upcoming Annual Meetings

- 2012 Indiana State University Bat Center in Terre Haute, IN
- 2013 Joe Kath will host somewhere in IL
- 2014 Tim Carter at Ball State University, Muncie, IN
- If you have ideas for future meetings, let any Board member know.

### Website [www.MWBWG.org](http://www.MWBWG.org)

- Limited information currently online, but we're working on updating and expanding it.
- Currently, our webmaster is Laura Hohman (grad student). We may pass to or cohost webmaster duties with permanent ISU staff.
- Planned updates:
  - Video links to speakers at past meetings.
  - Links – how to be a member (with possible online payment option) and how to sign up for listserv.
  - State Update section with point-of-contact and links.
  - News and journal article links.
  - Newsletters, projects, summaries, etc., for public viewing.

### State Contacts:

- State contacts will potentially be listed on website, one contact per state to help folks make contacts in the state. This is a coordination person to help pass on information or make connections between interested parties.
- We need Iowa point-of-contact. **Blake Sasse volunteered to be POC for AR.**
- We'd like to post any state bat working group meeting notes, updates, workshop agendas, etc., on the MW website.
- Seeking ideas for other ways to engage people.
  - Seeking liaison to facilitate info flow between the bat working groups.
    - Similar to the idea Rob presented earlier for a "Communications Facilitator"
  - Link MWBWG website on your site!
  - Listserv is currently best way for people to stay connected. Approximately 150 users.

### **New Bat Forum – Joy O’Keefe: <http://www.isubatcenter.org/>**

Indiana State University Bat Center has just started a bat forum to engage folks in discussions about bat issues (not so much the general public, although there is a place for the public to ask questions). Moderators still need to be identified for various topics. Please visit and register!

### **Why Organize State Bat Working Groups? – Al Kurta**

- MI & WI currently have state bat working groups.
- State working groups fit perfectly with the MW mission statement.
- Improves within-state communication.
- Annual meeting is short but informative and accommodates in-state travel restrictions.
- State groups often consist of non-MWBWG members, including state biologists, National Forest biologists, geologists involved with caves/mines and gating, and departments of public/community health.
  - This also provides a method to pass information back and forth from MW to state groups and reach people who would not otherwise attend MW meetings.

### **Other Business**

*Dennis Krusac* – There is the potential to list several bat species at state levels due to White-nose Syndrome (WNS). Dennis advocated the need for the bat working groups to work together to write conservation agreements for these species with agreed-upon methods to conserve certain features/habitats, and such, and to exempt silviculture, for instance. This should be done before they are federally listed. This way, once they are listed, certain management actions may be exempted, because pro-active energy spent on formulating conservation agreements. There is not a lot of benefits to listing bats that are not affected by management actions but that are affected by WNS. All the paperwork associated with listed species does not necessarily help bat conservation in the field but will serve to show that biologists have taken a pro-active approach to conserve WNS-affected bat species.

Discussion:

- If 3 eastern BWGs work together, there would be a starting point for USFWS to think about key points on species conservation.
- Suggestion: create a Wiki (password protected), species-by-species, start working on a framework.
- Appeared to be general agreement in group that this is a worthwhile endeavor.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 am.