

BAT CONSERVATION STRATEGY AND PLAN FOR THE STATE OF MONTANA^{TWS}

Nathan A. Schwab
University of Montana
Health Sciences Building, Room 203
Missoula, MT 59812

Bats are among the least studied animals, yet make up the second most diverse order of mammals in the world. Fifteen species of bat occur in Montana and this diversity reflects the variety of resource requirements between species. The economic and ecological benefit of bats, mainly consumption of nocturnal insects including agricultural and forest pests, has only recently been acknowledged. This realized importance increases the need for the protection of the essential resources utilized by bats; primarily day and hibernation roosts, foraging habitat, and open water. Montana continues to observe the significance of its wildlife as one of only a few states that have initiated and drafted conservation plans for bats. This conservation plan outlines the necessary steps toward successful bat conservation through four mechanisms: Research, Management, Inventory and Monitoring, and Education.