



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

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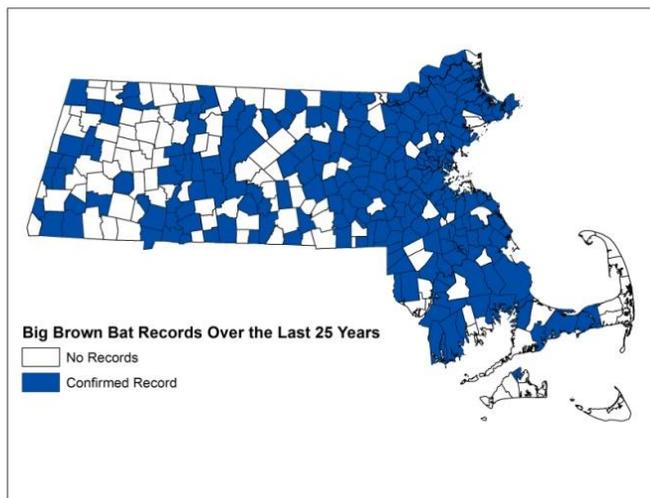
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Big Brown Bat *Eptesicus fuscus*

State Status: **None**
Federal Status: **None**

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: Throughout its range, the Big Brown Bat has long, glossy fur, pale (in deserts) to chocolate brown (in forests) above with lighter-colored belly hairs that are darker at the base. The wing membranes, ears, feet, and face are dark brown to black. The wingspan ranges from 11 to 13 inches; the body length is 4 to 5 inches. Big Brown Bats are insectivores. They have a varied diet, but beetles and stink bugs have been found to comprise the majority of their prey (Whitaker 1995).

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE: Big Brown Bat occurs throughout Massachusetts. Confirmed records exist in each of the 14 counties in Massachusetts and 226 of 351 towns. The Big Brown Bat is considered to be the most common and widely distributed bat in Massachusetts. Although not as dramatically affected as other species of bats in Massachusetts, its abundance has declined since 2007 due primarily to white-nose syndrome (French et al. 2013).



HABITAT DESCRIPTION: Big Brown Bats inhabit a wide range of habitats from urban to rural locations. They frequently roost in domestic dwellings, but can still be found in areas more traditionally associated with bat habitat such as trees and mines. During the winter, Big Brown Bat is the only bat in Massachusetts to prefer and commonly hibernate in buildings.

THREATS: Big Brown Bat is one of seven bat species in the United States and Canada to have been confirmed with white-nose syndrome. Among the bats affected by white-nose syndrome in Massachusetts, Big Brown Bats are the least affected. That said, Big Brown Bat populations have declined dramatically in Massachusetts since 2007 (French, et al. 2013).

REFERENCES:

- French, T.W., J.E. Cardoza, and G.S. Jones. 2013. *Homeowner's Guide to Bats*. Massachusetts Department of Fisheries & Wildlife: Westborough, MA.
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 2012. "White-nose Syndrome." <http://whitenosesyndrome.org/>
- Whitaker, J.O. Jr. 1995. Food of the big brown bat *Eptesicus fuscus* from maternity colonies in Indiana and Illinois. *American Midland Naturalist* 134:346-360.

Updated 2015

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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