

Northern Long-eared Bat, Listed as Threatened with Final 4(d) Rule:

Section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) directs the USFWS to issue regulations deemed “necessary and advisable to provide for the conservation of threatened species.” It allows the USFWS to promulgate special rules for species listed as threatened (not endangered) that provide flexibility in implementing the ESA. The USFWS use 4(d) rules to target the take prohibitions to those that provide conservation benefits for the species. This targeted approach can reduce ESA conflicts by allowing some activities that do not harm the species to continue, while focusing efforts on the threats that make a difference to the species’ recovery.

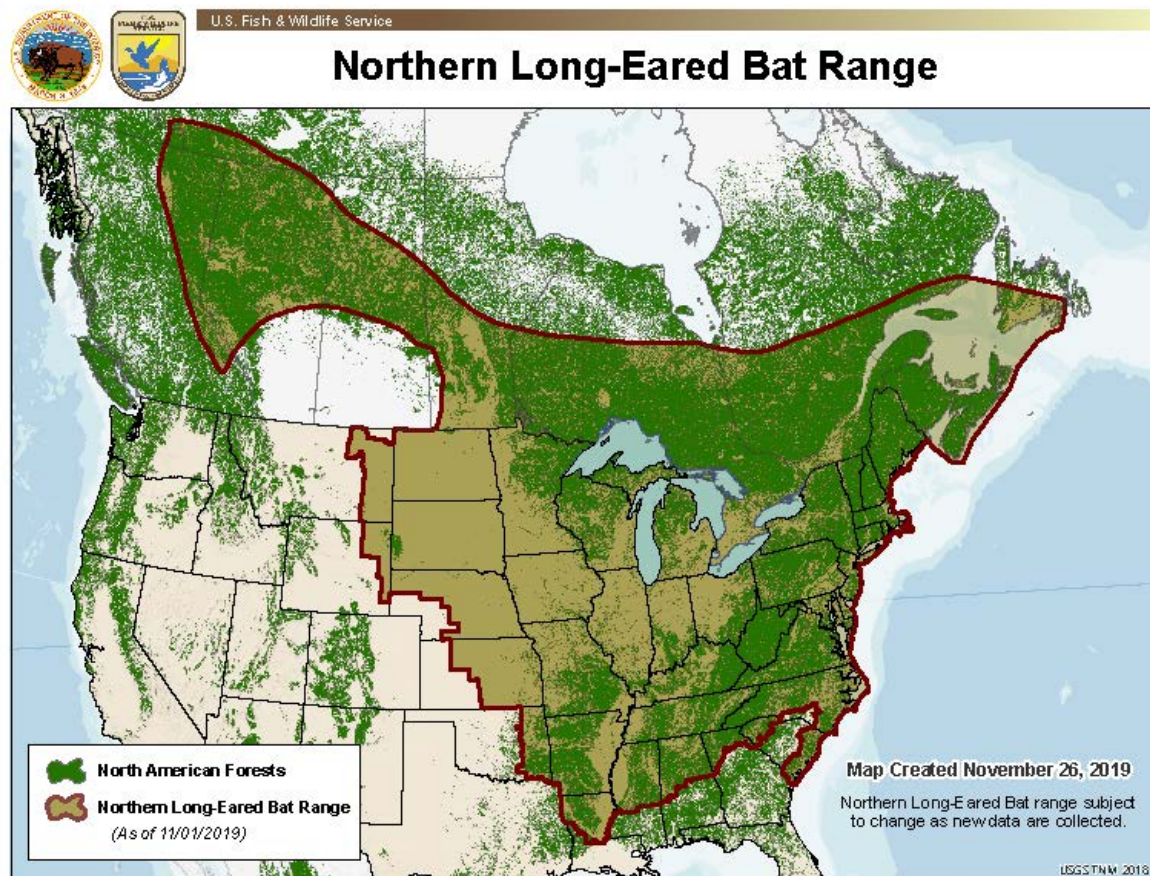
For the northern long-eared bat, the 4(d) rule tailors protections to areas affected by white-nose syndrome during the bat’s most sensitive life stages. The rule is designed to protect the bat while minimizing regulatory requirements for landowners, land managers, government agencies and others within the species’ range.

<https://www.fws.gov/Midwest/endangered/mammals/nleb/4drule.html>.

Northern Long-eared Bat Range in North America:

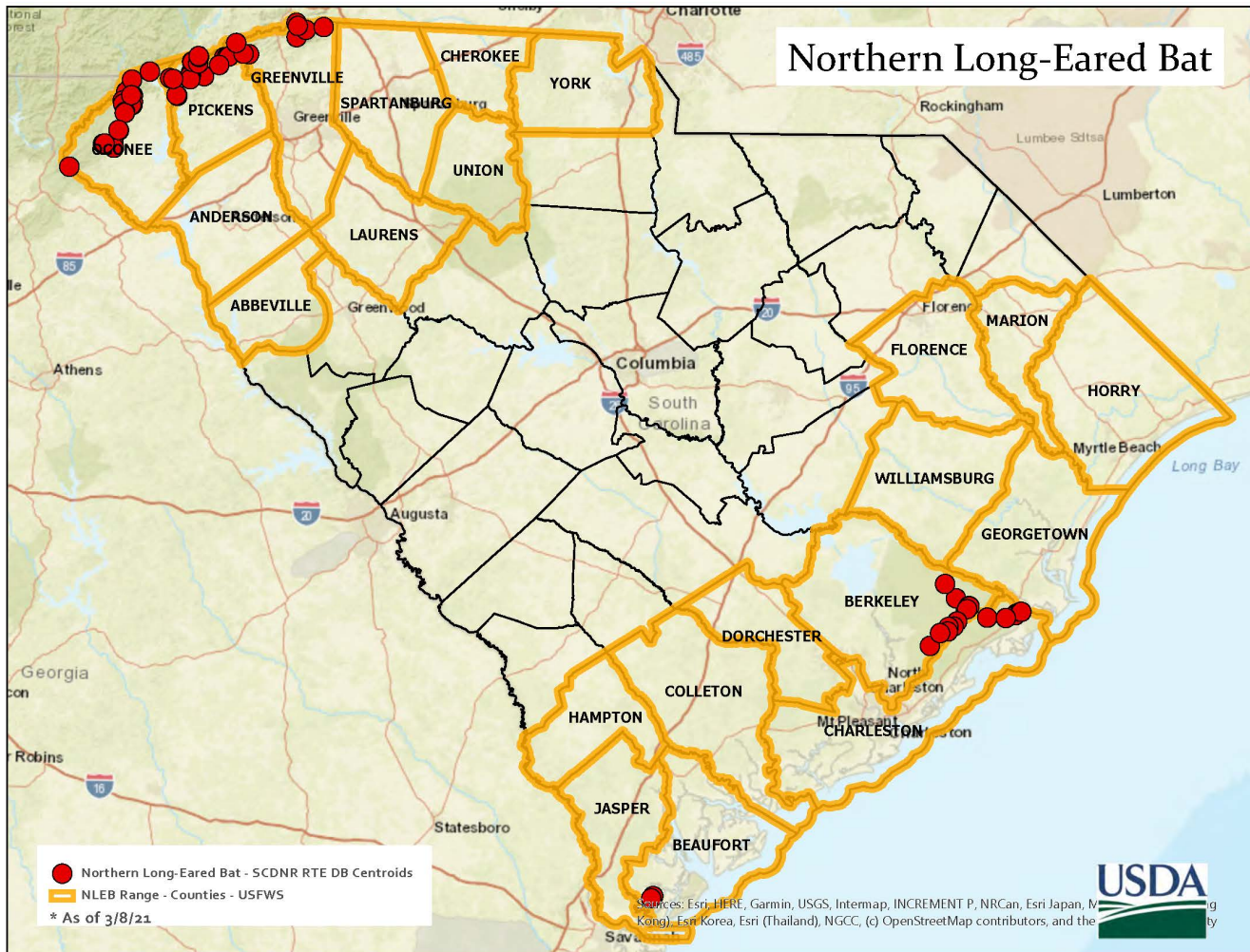
This map shows the northern long-eared bat range overlain with forested areas. Because northern long-eared bats require trees for roosting during summer, the forested areas within the range indicate where this bat may occur during times when it is not hibernating (spring through fall).

<https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nleb/nlebRangeMap.html>



Northern Long-eared Bat Range in South Carolina:

This map shows the northern long-eared bat range overlain with occurrences recorded by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR). Note that the range has increased in the east significantly since 1996.



Primary Conservation Provision, Avoid Forest Management within NLEB Range:

Northern long-eared bats use their maternity roost trees and hibernacula for many years. If the habitat around a roost is intact and the tree is suitable, the tree is likely an occupied maternity roost during the pup season (June 1 - July 31). Similarly, a hibernaculum is treated as remaining occupied unless a survey or other information indicates otherwise. Check the T&E database in Desktop and work with an NRCS biologist to determine if your project area might contain NLEB.

Therefore, if a northern long-eared bat roost tree or hibernacula is documented on or near a project area, any incidental take of bats will be exempted by the 4(d) rule if these conservation measures are followed:

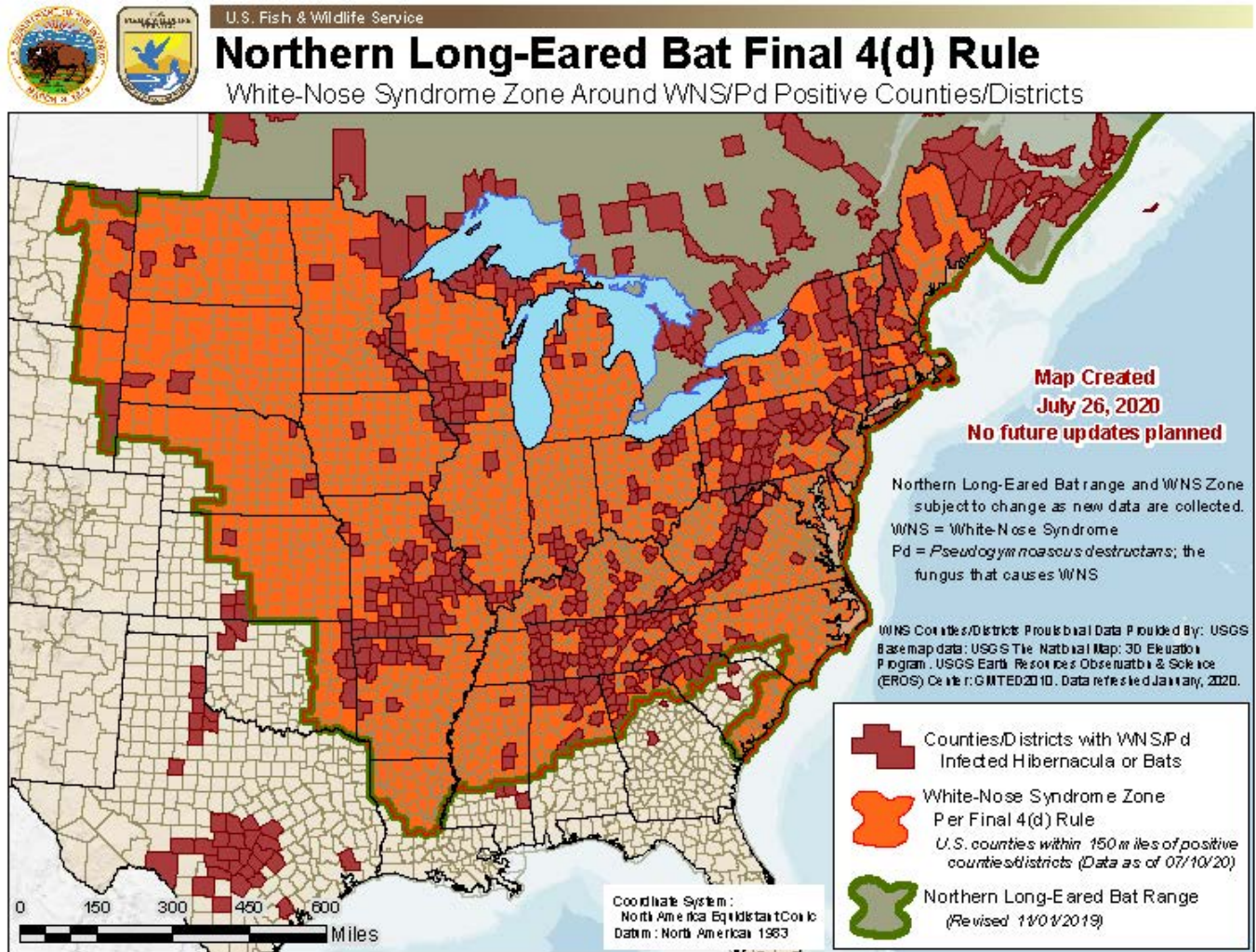
- Do not conduct any activities within ¼ mile of known, occupied *hibernacula*;
- Do not remove *roost trees*;
- Do not clear-cut (and similar harvest methods that cut most or essentially all trees from an area, *e.g.*, seed tree, shelterwood, and coppice) or conduct a prescribed fire within 150 feet of known, occupied *roost trees* from the **June 1 - July 31 pup season and/or from the April 1 - October 31 active season.**

White-Nose Syndrome Range in North America:

Under the 4(d) rule, incidental take outside the WNS zone is exempted from ESA prohibitions.

This map shows the Northern Long-eared Bat range overlain with the White-Nose Syndrome Zone (WNS) and counties with WNS infected bats.

<https://www.batcon.org/our-work/research-and-scalable-solutions/white-nose-syndrome/>



Practices That Can Help:

Leave Dead and Dying Trees Standing: Like most eastern bats, the northern long-eared bat roosts in trees during summer. They prefer to roost in trees and snags under loose bark. Where possible and not a safety hazard, leave dead or dying trees standing (or create snags by girdling trees). Bats and many other animals use these trees.

Maintain Connectivity: Maintain forest patches and forested connections (e.g., hedgerows, riparian corridors) between patches and maintain natural vegetation between forest patches/connections and developed areas.

Install a Bat Box: Dead and dying trees are usually not left standing, so trees suitable for roosting may be in short supply and bat boxes may provide additional roost sites. Bat boxes are especially needed from April to August when females look for safe and quiet places to give birth and raise their pups.

Photos from SCDNR of roost trees (sweetgum and long leaf pine) in eastern South Carolina, 2018-2019 in <https://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/bats/2018-2019nlongearedbat.pdf>

