

Tree Cutting and Northern Long Eared Bat

The Northern Long Eared Bat, is listed as *Threatened* by the United State Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and is protected under the Endangered Species Act.

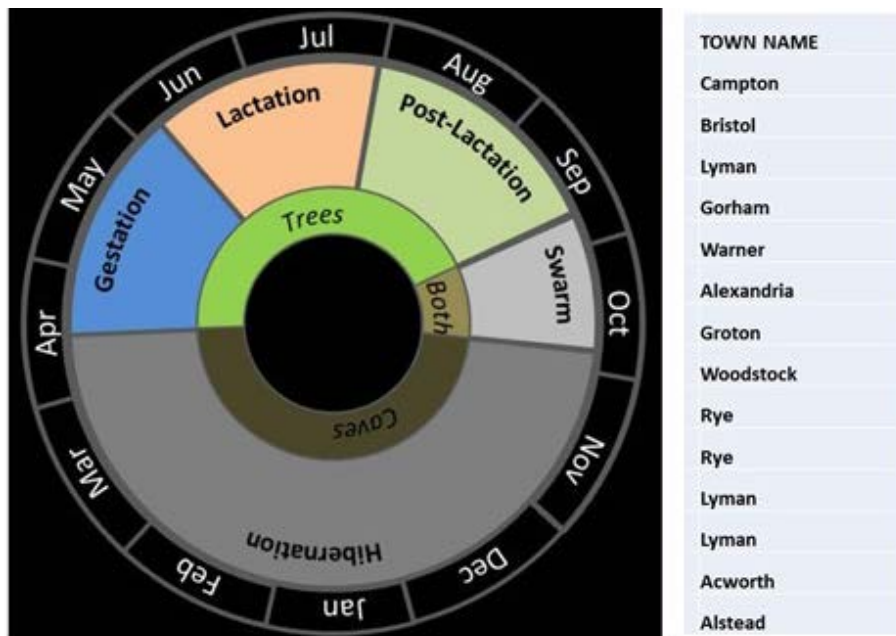
Document Purpose:

Describe the process for **streamlined consultation** under the final 4d rule with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and/or the addition of conservation measures to avoid harming bats at various life stages **for existing funded projects and new applications** (Federal Easement Programs, Federal Cost Share Programs, and Technical Assistance). NH NRCS projects are held to a higher standard than private forest projects without Federal involvement and have increased time of year restrictions (See Page 2).

Projects within ¼ mile of a known hibernacula

There are known hibernacula (bat caves), in NH. These locations are not made available to the general public but landowners can find out if there property is near a known hibernacula by requesting information from the NH Natural Heritage Bureau (NHNHB) data check tool. (see table below).

All tree cutting practices funded or approved by NRCS, within ¼ mile of a known hibernacula or that impact known roost trees will be reviewed by the USFWS on a case-by-case basis under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.



Above: Left- life cycle of the NLEB. Graphic Credit Alex Silvis

Above: Right- a list of towns in NH with known hibernacula. Note, abutting towns may have areas within the ¼ mile buffer zone. Contact NH-NHB for site specific information.

Exempted Activities that Result in No Affect and Do NOT require consultation or filing of Streamlined Consultation

- Projects > ¼ mile from known hibernacula or > 150 feet from known roost trees **AND**,
- Tree Cutting Practices that take place from November 1st – April 14th **OR**,
- Projects with a tree cutting footprint of less than 1 acre cumulative in non-forested landscapes (clearing fence lines, removing trees around agricultural lands without cracks, crevices, exfoliation bark). **OR**,
- Removal of hazard trees **OR**,
- Managing young forest (DBH <6”) and/or shrubland vegetation where high stocking rates are unattractive to bats and young trees haven’t developed suitable roosting features (cracks and exfoliating bark). **Voluntary Best Management Practice includes cutting outside of the nesting season after August 1st for nesting wildlife.**

Time of year restrictions *New England specific recommended time-of-year restrictions for tree removal in suitable NLEB habitat:*

June or July -No Tree Cutting or Girdling will take place. This is because young of year, are unable to fly and most susceptible to impacts from tree felling.

April 16th – May 31st and/or August 1st – October 31st. Tree cutting during these time windows can harm bats and NRCS will need to send projects which involve cutting more than 1 acre of trees to USFWS for review under the **Optional Framework to Streamline Section 7 Consultation for the Northern Long Eared Bat.**