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ENVIRONMENT

**U.S. puts bat on list
of threatened species**

← The federal government said Wednesday that it is listing the northern long-eared bat as threatened, giving new protections to a species that has been nearly wiped out in some areas by the spread of a fungal disease.

White-nose syndrome was discovered among bats in a cave near Albany, N.Y., in 2006. Since then, it has killed millions of the flying mammals in the Northeast, South and Midwest. It spreads while they congregate on the walls of caves or abandoned mines, causing them to starve or dehydrate.

The Fish and Wildlife Service concluded that the northern long-eared bat meets the criteria for a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. It stopped short of declaring the bat endangered, which would mean that it is in danger of extinction.

Agency officials said interim rules take effect May 4 and final rules will be issued by year's end.

—Associated Press