

DRAFT -- North Georgia Bats -- DRAFT

Effects Determination Guidance for Endangered & Threatened Species (EDGES)

Species Covered by This EDGES:

- Endangered: Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and Gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*)
- Threatened: Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)

All three bat species winter in caves. Female gray bats rear pups in cave habitats (although the winter and maternity caves may not be the same), but both Indiana and Northern long-eared bats rear young in forested habitat, under loose bark or in tree cracks and crevices. Individuals may also rear pups or roost in bridge joists or culverts, in old buildings, under shutters, and in similar habitats. The primary threat to these species is whitenose syndrome, a disease that has killed millions of bats. Until treatment for whitenose can be developed, protection of maternity bats and their pups is essential to maintain at least a minimum number of breeding individuals.



This EDGES focuses on tree clearing, bridge/culvert removal/maintenance, structure removal, and blasting or other percussive activities, which can kill, injure, or harrass gray bats in their winter or maternity caves and/or nursing female Indiana or Northern long-eared bats and their non-flying pups. The 4(d) rule for the Northern long-eared bat exempts take from the ESA's prohibitions, except in areas near known hibernacula or summer maternity roosts. There is no 4(d) rule for the Indiana or gray bat.

Endangered Species Act Consultation Checklist:

Applicant:

1. IPAC indicates listed bats may occur in the project area.
 - a. No.....No effect. Provide IPaC information to the Savannah District with application/PCN.
 - b. Yes.....Go to #2.
2. The Fish and Wildlife Service-Georgia Field Offices (FWS-GA) provided documentation evaluating habitat, potential presence of species, suitable survey methodology and/or potential project impacts (FWS-GA signed letter or sticker, T&E survey where FWS-GA provided concurrence with negative findings, or similar documentation).
 - a. No.....Provide completed EDGES Applicant Coordination Slip and supporting documentation to the Savannah District with 404 application/PCN.
 - b. Yes.....Provide FWS-GA project review documentation and/or survey data to the Savannah District with application/PCN.

Savannah District:

3. The project is within 0.5 miles of a known cave or maternity nest tree in north Georgia (see GIS layer). You must consider this step for each bat species that IPAC indicated in #2 may occur in the project area.
 - a. No (evaluate for each of the three bat species)
 - i. Indiana bats.....Go to #4 to continue to assess impacts of timber removal.
 - ii. Gray bats.....NLAA. FWS-GA concurrence not needed.
 - iii. NLEB.....Take of NLEB is exempted by the 4(d) rule. Inform FWS via email or on the Friday PCN spreadsheet that the 4(d) rule applied so that we can monitor.

- b. Yes (all listed bats).....Consult with FWS-GA regarding potential impacts to bat staging, swarming, maternity, and cave habitats.
4. The project requires (a) cutting, harvest, and/or clearing of trees >3" diameter at breast habitat; (b) maintenance, alteration, and/or removal of an existing bridge/culvert; and/or (c) removal of an old structure that may provide maternity or roost habitat for listed bats.
- a. No.....NLAA Indiana bats. Consultation complete. FWS-GA concurrence not needed.
- b. Yes.....Go to #5.
5. The project involves tree clearing only. No bridges, culverts, or structures that may provide maternity or roost habitat for bats will be maintained, altered, or removed.
- a. No.....Consult with FWS-GA-Athens regarding potential impacts of bridge, culvert, or structure alteration on Indiana bats.
- b. Yes.....Go to #6.
6. Tree clearing will be conducted inside of the Indiana bat summer maternity period (mid-May to the end of July).
- a. Yes.....Go to #7.
- b. No.....NLAA. Consultation complete. FWS-GA concurrence is needed, in writing for JPNs, but is assumed for other Savannah District actions if FWS-GA does not respond.
7. Quick email consultation with FWS-GA documents Indiana bats are not likely to be adversely affected by project, based on FWS-GA habitat models, existing survey records, and review of habitat characteristics.
- a) No.....May Affect. Consult with FWS-GA-Athens to evaluate if bat maternity habitat will be impacted during the breeding season.
- b) Yes.....NLAA. Consultation complete.

