

Partnership Project Success Story

State:	Colorado	FS Funds Used:	\$ 2,000
National Forest/Grassland:	White River National Forest Aspen/Sopris Ranger District	Other Funds Used:	\$
		Partners:	\$ 5,000
Project Name:	Cave Bat Surveys	Total Project Cost:	\$ 7,000

Project Purpose/Objectives: As part of on-going Forest Plan monitoring we inventory and monitor cave bats, including the Townsend’s big-eared bat. This species is a Forest Service sensitive species, and as a cave bat, it is a Management Indicator Species. Adult Townsend’s big-eared bats have a body length of only about 4 inches. However, their ears stick up 1 1/2 inches, and their wingspan is about 10 inches.

Work Performed: In cooperation with Colorado Division of Wildlife and members of the Colorado Cave Survey and Roaring Fork Conservancy (non-profit groups), two Forest Service employees surveyed a recently discovered colony of Townsend’s big-eared bats on five occasions at an abandoned mine located on Aspen-Sopris District. Surveys effort by Forest Service personnel was a total of 25 hours (10 hours NFIM, 15 hours NFMG), with 74 survey hours provided by cooperators.

Hundreds of Townsend’s big-eared bats were recorded exiting the mine by conducting an exit count verified with a video count. To assess reproductive condition, we captured a sample of males and females using a mist net, but we caught no juveniles or lactating females. In 2005 we found that a few captured females showed signs of lactation. See attached photos.

Benefits: According to Colorado Division of Wildlife, the population of Townsend’s big-eared bats at this site may be the largest know population in Colorado on public land and the second largest overall in the state. The site is thought to be used throughout the year, including during winter for hibernation. Due to the large population size and limited knowledge about other such known sites on White River National Forest, this site may be important for viability of this species across the Forest and possibly across the Rocky Mountain Region.

Additional Information

Partners: Colorado Division of Wildlife and members of the Colorado Cave Survey and Roaring Fork Conservancy (non-profit groups).



Surveys for cave bats, in cooperation with Colorado Division of Wildlife and other partners included mist-net captures to collect species data.



Surveys included video recording out-flights at portals to more accurately count cave bats.