

## PROGRAM ACTIVITY REPORT (PAR)



## TOXOPLASMOSIS TESTING IN MUTE SWANS

Toxoplasmosis is a parasitic disease caused by the protozoan, *Toxoplasma gondii*. Most mammals species can become infected with toxoplasmosis

by eating infected meat, by ingestion of feces of a cat that has itself recently been infected, or by transmission from mother to fetus.



Although domestic cats are the primary source of infection for pregnant and immune-compromised people in many countries (primarily through fecal contamination of hands), contact with raw meat also serves as a source of human infections. Wild birds can serve as hosts for *T. gondii*. As part of a project to control invasive mute swans in the

Great Lakes region and northeast, the NWDP is conducting surveillance for various pathogens including Newcastle Disease Virus, *Salmonella* species, and various intestinal parasites. Toxoplasmosis was recently added to the list of diseases being monitored. Serum samples will be screened by the Agricultural Research Service in Beltsville, Maryland with the modified agglutination test for exposure to *T. gondii*. In addition, heart samples will be bioassayed in mice to culture *T. gondii*. For more information please contact Kerri Pedersen,

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## WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

The NWDP is assisting State, Tribal, and Federal agencies in addressing threats to hibernating cave-dwelling bats from white-nose syndrome, an emerging infectious disease caused by a *Geomyces destructans*. This newly discovered fungus infects the skin of bats during hibernation and is thought to cause alterations in behavior and physiology resulting in mortality. A recent study estimated that insectivorous bats provide \$3.7-53 billion in services to the agricultural industry, and current trends in population impacts could result in significant costs to agriculture. The NWDP represents APHIS on the Interagency

Executive and Steering Committees overseeing the implementation of the recently released plan to manage and study the disease. The program also serves on the disease management and surveillance working groups. While Wildlife Services has contributed about \$20,000 of in kind services to the interagency effort to date, the potential for increased agricultural impacts resulting from this syndrome likely will increase our role in

the management of this disease. For more information please contact Tom DeLiberto,

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Photo: Ryan von Linden

The original artwork on this page was created by the National Wildlife Disease Program's Erika Kampe and Sarah Goff