

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT  
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**Animal Abstract**

**Element Code:** AMACC08014

**Data Sensitivity:** Yes

**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens*

**COMMON NAME:** Pale Townsend's Big-eared Bat; Pale Lump-nosed Bat; Lump-nosed Bat; Western Big-eared Bat; Long-eared Bat; Western Long-eared Bat; Western Lump-nosed Bat; Mule-eared Bat

**SYNONYMS:** *Plecotus townsendii pallescens*; *Corynorhinus rafinesquii pallescens*; *Corynorhinus macrotis pallescens*

**FAMILY:** Vespertilionidae

**AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION:** *Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens* Frost, American Museum Novitates 3034:1-16, 1992. *Plecotus townsendii pallescens* Handley, Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus., 110:190, 1959. *Corynorhinus macrotis pallescens* Miller, N. Amer. Fauna, 13:52, October 16, 1897.

**TYPE LOCALITY:** *Corynorhinus macrotis pallescens*, Keam Canyon, Navajo County, Arizona.

**TYPE SPECIMEN:** USNM 66534, 1894-08-03, A.K. Fisher (1715)

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** One of two species in the genus *Corynorhinus* that occurs in North America, and the only one that occurs in Arizona. All Arizona populations are considered from the subspecies *C. t. pallescens*, 1 of 5 subspecies in the species *townsendii*. Species was originally placed in the genus *Corynorhinus* (ASM 2022). Handley (1959) included the species in the genus *Plecotus*. Frost and Timm (1992) evaluated morphological and karyological characters from a phylogenetic perspective; they re-elevated the subgenus *Corynorhinus* to full genus status—the North American species *Plecotus mexicanus*, *Plecotus rafinesquii* and *Plecotus townsendii* were once again placed in the genus *Corynorhinus*, leaving the Old World species *Plecotus auritus*, *Plecotus austriacus* and *Plecotus teneriffae* as the only members of the genus *Plecotus*. A morphological phylogenetic analysis by Tumilson and Douglas (1992) also concluded that the North American species should be placed in the genus *Corynorhinus*. Bogdanowicz et al. (1998) examined the morphological and chromosomal variation and found that *Corynorhinus* is strongly supported as a distinct genus, with *Plecotus* limited to Palearctic species; also, they concluded that *Idionycteris phyllotis* and *Euderma maculatum* should be regarded as generically distinct.

**DESCRIPTION:** Medium-sized bat, wingspan 30-34 cm (12-13 in), forearm 3.9-4.7 cm (1.56-1.88 in.), weight 8-14 g (0.3-0.5 oz). Dorsal hairs are slate or gray with pale cinnamon brown to blackish brown tips that contrast little with the base. The ventral hairs are slate, gray or brownish with brownish or buff tips. Large hairless ears, 3.0-3.9 cm (1.2-1.56 in.) in

length, are joined across the forehead. They have a large glandular lump on each side of the nose. The hairs on their toes do not project beyond the toenails.

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:** *Corynorhinus townsendii* is distinguished from all but 4 species of Arizona bats by its large ears. Presence of a pair of glandular lumps on the nose distinguishes *C. townsendii* from the other 4 big-eared species: *Macrotus californicus* (California leaf-nosed bat), *Euderma maculatum* (Spotted bat), *Idionycteris phyllotis* (Allen's lappet-browed bat) and *Antrozous pallidus* (Pallid bat). *C. townsendii* distinguished by its unicuspid first upper incisor from *P. mexicanus*; a Mexican species with a bicuspid first upper incisor whose range in northeastern Sonora extends to within a few miles of Arizona's southeastern border.

Additionally, when compared with *P. mexicanus*, *C. townsendii* is distinguished by its dorsal hairs having bases much lighter than tips rather than bases and tips being almost the same color; crossribs in tail membrane usually >9.0 mm (0.36 in.) rather than fewer; tragus usually >13.0 mm (0.52 in.) rather than less.

At day roosts this species may be suspected when guano is found in circular patches in open areas. *Macrotus californicus* may be suspected if the guano is found at the edges of open areas (i.e. near the base of the sides or walls of a mine or other roost).

#### **ILLUSTRATIONS:**

- Color photo (Barbour and Davis 1969: plate XVIII)
- Black and white photo (Barbour and Davis 1969:164, 176)
- Color photo (Whitaker 1980: plate 145)
- Color photo of species (Harvey, Altenbach, and Best, 1999: p. 55)
- Color photo of species (Wilson 1999)

**TOTAL RANGE:** Central highlands of northern Mexico and southern California to the Edwards Plateau of Texas, with isolated populations in the Black Hills of South Dakota and the Gypsum Hills of south-central Kansas, western Oklahoma and northwestern Texas.

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** Widespread in Arizona. Their range includes Cochise, Coconino, Gila, Graham, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, Yavapai, and Yuma counties (AGFD, unpublished records accessed 2003).

#### **SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**BIOLOGY:** These bats prefer to hang from open ceilings at roost sites and do not use cracks or crevices. At maternity roost's these bats apparently prefer dim light near the edge of the lighted zone. In Arizona, emergence times and especially return times and patterns probably vary as they do elsewhere depending on insect activity and development stage of young.

Winter roosts generally contain fewer individuals (usually singles or small groups and in Arizona occasionally as many as 50) than summer roosts. For hibernation, they prefer roost sites where the temperature is 12° C (54° F) or less. These may be near entrances and in well-ventilated areas of the roost. The bats may arouse and move to other spots in the roost during the winter, to be in areas of more stable cold temperatures. The ears are erectile, and can be collapsed and rolled up while at rest and expanded to usual size when alert.

**REPRODUCTION:** Males and females congregate separately in summer. Although males are thought to be mostly solitary, the females form maternity colonies of 12 to about 200 in the western U.S. and up to 1000 or more in the eastern U.S. In Arizona, 5 and possibly 2 additional maternity colonies have been found with numbers in one of about 100 and in another of several 100s. The most populous colony disappeared in the 1970s shortly after the roost site was gated to protect archeological and paleontological remains. After the gate was modified in the mid 1980s several bat species (but not *C. townsendii*) were observed flying inside the site. Current status of these sites is unknown.

In Arizona, females are pregnant in April, with maternity colonies reported in late April. Indirect evidence (near term embryos and presence of newborns) indicates the single young are born in June in Arizona. Dates of birth vary considerably throughout their range, anywhere from late April to mid July. In Arizona, most young are flying by the end of July; they can fly at 2.5-3 weeks of age. Elsewhere young are weaned at about 6 to 8 weeks. Nursery colonies begin to disperse during August. Following mating in fall and winter (sometimes it takes place while the female is torpid) sperm is stored in the female's reproductive tract until spring. Fertilization occurs when ovulation takes place.

Males in their first autumn produce few sperm and are thought to be essentially sterile and probably nonbreeding. Females in their first autumn however, do breed and then bear young the following summer. Gestation varies from 56 to 100 days after fertilization depending on climatic conditions and the resultant metabolic rates of the females (i.e. development is slowed when the female goes into daily torpor). Band recoveries in California suggest a maximum longevity of 16+ years.

**FOOD HABITS:** Small moths, 3-10 mm (average 6 mm), are the primary food of these bats. Neuropterans, coleopterans, dipterans and hymenopterans are also sometimes taken. They are reported to take prey from leaves and while in flight along forested edges. Following a late night peak of activity they usually go to a night roost. They may forage again in the early morning since they are reported not to return to their daytime roosts until shortly before sunrise. They may forage several miles (4-5 miles) from the roost site. They cull the wings of moths and other insects before consuming their abdomen.

**HABITAT:** In Arizona, summer day roosts are found in caves and mines from desertscrub up to woodlands and coniferous forests. Night roosts may often be in abandoned buildings. In winter, they hibernate in cold caves, lava tubes and mines mostly in uplands and mountains from the vicinity of the Grand Canyon to the southeastern part of the state.

**ELEVATION:** *Corynorhinus townsendii* have been observed between 550 and 7,520 feet (168 – 2,294 m). Most records, however, seem to range above 3,000 feet (915 m). According to AGFD HDMS unpublished records (accessed 2003) *Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens* range between 550 - 8,437 ft (168 – 5,272 m) in Arizona.

**PLANT COMMUNITY:** Desertscrub, oak woodland, oak/pine, pinyon/juniper, and coniferous forests.

**POPULATION TRENDS:** Thought to be declining due to loss of historic habitat of caves and mines.

### **SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:** SC (USDI, FWS 1996)  
[C2 – as *Plecotus townsendii pallescens* (USDI, FWS 1994)]

**STATE STATUS:** 1 (AZGFD, AWCS 2022)  
[1B (AGFD SWAP 2012)]

**OTHER STATUS:** Bureau of Land Management Sensitive – at full species (USDI, BLM AZ 2010, 2017)  
[Bureau of Land Management Sensitive – as *Plecotus townsendii* (USDI, BLM 2008)]  
Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS Region 3 2007, 2013)  
Group 4, species level (NNDFW, NESL 2000, 2005, 2008)

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:** The greatest threats are human disturbance and vandalism at maternity and hibernating sites, and loss of roosting (mine closures) and foraging habitats (deforestation).

**PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:** *Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens* is listed as a vulnerable species in the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (Pima County 2016).

**SUGGESTED PROJECTS:** Surveys are needed to locate, census and monitor maternity colonies. More information is needed on summer and winter roost sits and foraging areas.

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** BIA - Fort Apache, Hualapai, and San Carlos Reservations, and Tohono O’odham Nation; BLM - Arizona Strip, Havasu, Kingman, and Tucson Field Offices; DOD - Fort Huachuca Military Reservation; FWS - Havasu and Kofa National Wildlife Refuges; NPS - Grand Canyon and Saguaro National Parks, and Chiricahua, Montezuma Castle, and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monuments; USFS - Coconino, Coronado, Kaibab, Prescott and Tonto National Forests; State Land Department;

Hualapai Mountain County Park; AMNH Southwestern Research Station; Colossal Cave;  
Tucson Mountain Park; Private.

## SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

These bats are versatile in flight, darting swiftly from place to place, or flying slowly and deliberately, or hovering. Their maneuverability can make it difficult to capture them with hand or mist nets or even to corner them in an enclosed mine tunnel or building.

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