

# BATS: Diversity and Conservation in Connecticut and Beyond

## State Biologist Dr. Devaughn Fraser



“Bats represent one of the most unique, diverse and extraordinary groups of mammals on the planet. Here in Connecticut and across the northeast, they are also one of the most imperiled. A devastating disease known as white nose syndrome has been afflicting our bats for over 15 years. Incidentally introduced to North America from Europe, the disease is caused by a fungus that attacks the bats while they hibernate in the winter, and has led to greater than 90% declines in several of our cave-dwelling species. Connecticut boasts nine different species of bat, three of which are not affected by white nose syndrome, but which face their own unique conservation challenges, including climate change and

sustainable energy development. During this program, state biologist Dr. Devaughn Fraser, will introduce the audience to the diversity of bats here in Connecticut, provide some background on their unique evolutionary history, and discuss the methods used by the state to monitor and protect these critical members of our natural communities.

Dr. Fraser has been working with wildlife for over twenty years, studying everything from lynx and mountain lions, to prairie chickens, prairie dogs, and of course, bats. She received her doctorate from UCLA in 2017 where she specialized in the use of genetic methods to investigate human impacts on wildlife. Since coming to join CT DEEP’s Wildlife Diversity Program, Dr. Fraser has worked to expand the programs ability to monitor and track recovering bat populations and make recommendations to improve their conservation outcomes.”

