
Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Corynorhinus townsendii

Mammalia — Chiroptera — Vespertilionidae

CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide: Apparently secure (G4)
Statewide: Vulnerable (S3)
ESA: No status
USFS: Region 1: Sensitive; Region 4: Sensitive
BLM: Regional/State imperiled (Type 3)
IDFG: Protected nongame

BASIS FOR INCLUSION

Potential population declines and threats.

TAXONOMY

This species has formerly been placed in the genus *Plecotus*. Two subspecies reportedly occur in Idaho. The subspecies *P. townsendii pallescens* occurs in the eastern part of the state. The subspecies *P. townsendii townsendii* is expected to occur in the western part of the state, although range limits for this subspecies are not well understood.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

Townsend's big-eared bat occurs across western North America from British Columbia south to Mexico and east to the western Great Plains. Disjunct populations occur in the Ozark Mountains in the south-central U. S. and in West Virginia and Virginia. Populations in Idaho occur predominately on the Snake River Plain, but scattered populations have been reported throughout the State.

POPULATION TREND

Populations in the State appear to be declining (Wackenhut 1990, Lewis 1994). The largest known populations in Idaho occur with lava flows in the southeastern part of the state (Genter 1989).

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

Distribution and abundance is highly correlated with suitable cavity forming rock formations and historic mining districts (Genter 1986). More than 90% of their diet consists of Lepidopterans (Whitaker et al. 1977, 1981). Only 2 maternity colonies have been confirmed in Idaho and both sites are found in the Craters of the Moon National Monument. Numerous hibernacula in lava tube caves have been identified in south central and southeast Idaho (Genter 1986, Lewis 1994, Keller and Saathoff 1995).

ISSUES

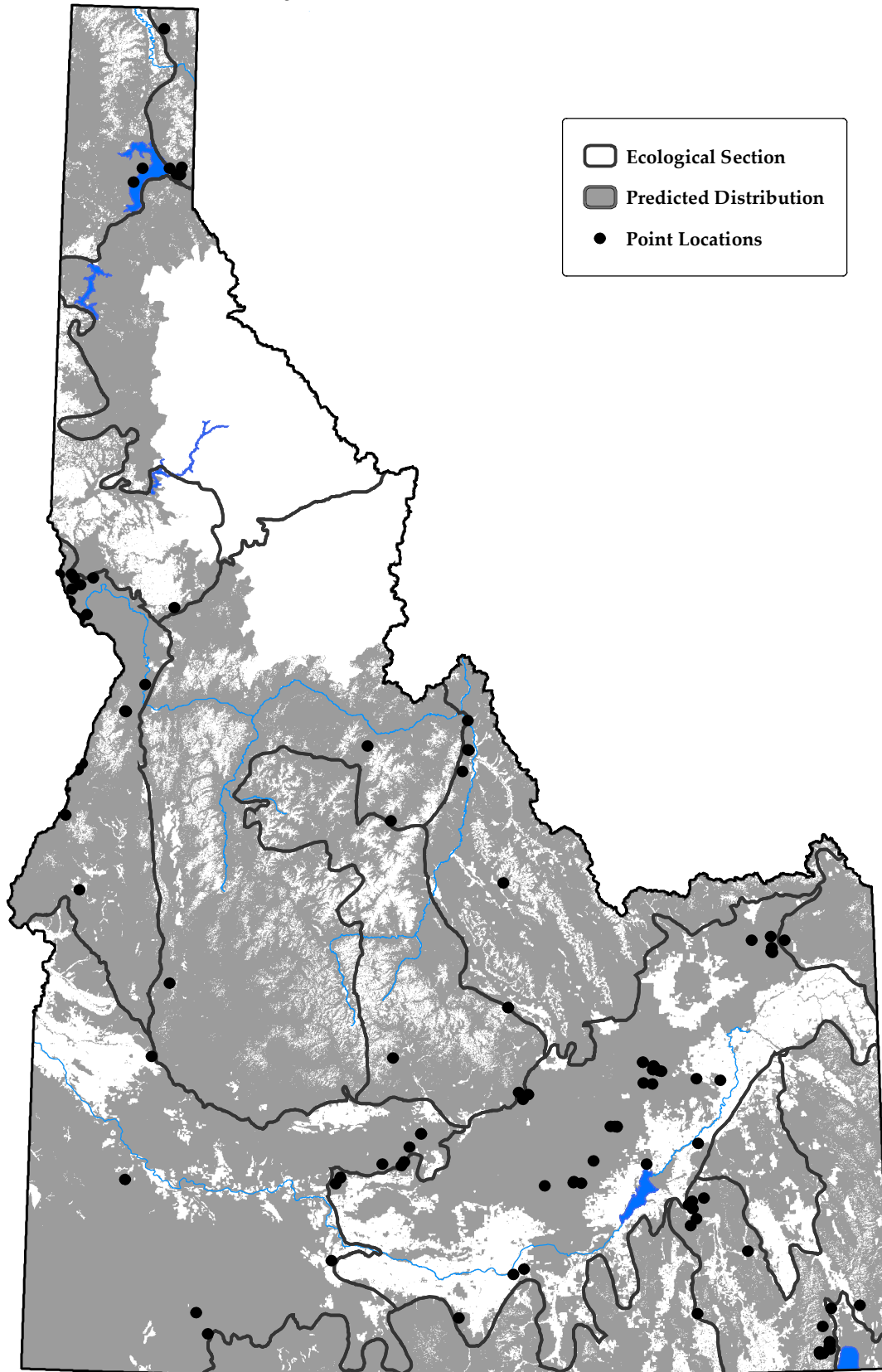
The primary issue facing this species is disturbance and destruction of roost sites through mine closures, renewed mining, recreational caving, and other roost-disturbing activities. This species is sensitive to anthropogenic disturbances (Pierson et al. 1999).

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Document state population trends. Restore year-round roosting options by working with land managers on mine mitigation techniques before closure and by working with local cave groups to identify formerly used roost sites in caves. Compare the distribution of species with the distribution of habitat types and focus recovery efforts in areas where historical populations occurred.

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Map created on September 23, 2005
and prepared by Idaho Conservation Data Center.
Sources: Point data are from Idaho Conservation Data Center,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (2005). Predicted distribution
is from the Wildlife Habitat Relationships Models (WHR),
A Gap Analysis of Idaho: Final Report. Idaho Cooperative Fish
and Wildlife Research Unit, Moscow, ID (Scott et al. 2002).
Predicted distribution is approximate (for more information, go to
http://www.wildlife.uidaho.edu/idgap/idgap_report.asp).

