Environmental Profile: Fayette County, Indiana

Information & County Contacts

Fayette County Visitor’s Center:
(765) 825-1523

Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District:
(765) 825-4311 ext. 3

Endangered Species:

Evening Bat (*Nycticeius humeralis*)

*Nycticeius humeralis* is dark brown except for its black ears. Its snout, wings, and tail membranes are hairless. Evening bats prefer the forest and open habitats such as river corridors and wetlands. These are forest bats and are never found in caves. Instead *N. humeralis* roosts in hollows of trees, under loose bark, or in buildings.

Temperate North American bats are now threatened by a fungal disease called “white-nose syndrome.” This disease has devastated eastern North American bat populations at hibernation sites since 2007. The fungus, *Geomyces destructans*, grows best in cold, humid conditions that are typical of many bat hibernacula. The fungus grows on, and in some cases invades the bodies of hibernating bats and seems to result in disturbance from hibernation, causing a debilitating loss of important metabolic resources and mass deaths. Mortality rates at some hibernation sites have been as high as 90%.¹

¹http://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Nycticeius_humeralis/
American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)

A stocky and well-camouflaged heron of dense reed beds, the American Bittern is difficult to see. Its far-carrying booming call is distinctive, but the bittern itself likes to keep under cover. American Bitterns are almost always solitary and can be difficult to see.

They often hide among wetland vegetation, walking slowly as they forage. American Bitterns typically hunt in low light, catching food with their bill and killing prey with biting or shaking movements. Flight is stiff and fairly clumsy with rapid wingbeats. Territorial males display at each other by approaching while hunkered down, head lowered to the level of its back, neck drawn in, and revealing white plumes at the shoulders.²

²[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Bittern/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Bittern/lifehistory)