

Summer 2022 marks the very first field season of my graduate research project. For the last three weeks, my crew and I have been mist netting for bats at Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, and Mount Rushmore National Memorial. My graduate research aims to identify and characterize maternity roost structures of the federally listed Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). To accomplish this goal, my crew and I must first capture this elusive species. We have been strategically mist netting over water and across ponderosa pine corridors to increase the odds of capturing a pregnant female *Myotis septentrionalis*. Our field days are long—we arrive at our netting site by 6pm and then continue to net for bats for 5 hours past civil sunset, normally ending the day around 2:30am. If we successfully netted and placed a radio transmitter on a pregnant *Myotis septentrionalis*, then we start our day early to track the female back to her maternity day roost.

The field work is hard, but incredibly rewarding. *Myotis septentrionalis* populations have been declining exponentially since the introduction of white-nose syndrome into the United States. Identifying and characterizing maternity roosts for the National Park Service will help improve forest management so that these critical habitat features remain available for future generations of reproductive females to raise healthy pups.

The WY-TWS has helped me succeed in my first season of field work by their generous award of \$750 through the 2022 Graduate Student Scholarship. The 2022 Graduate Student Scholarship allowed me to attend the 2022 WY-TWS conference in April, purchase rainboots (ideal for netting over muddy landscapes), first aid supplies, camping gear, and external hard drives for my summer field season. I would like to thank the active members of the WY-TWS for supporting my graduate research in the Black Hills of South Dakota. I look forward to sharing my research with you all as I progress through my graduate program.



Photos (left to right): Renee Lile and *Myotis septentrionalis* captured at Wind Cave during 2022 field season (photo by Tai Mei Chang), 2022 summer field crew (left to right) Tai Mei Chang, Carolyn Sheehy, and Renee Lile (me). Bison roam our field site in Wind Cave National Park, causing us to often switch plans to avoid having nets too close to a roaming herd. (photo by Riley Bernard), Renee Lile holding a captured *Myotis septentrionalis* (photo by Riley Bernard).