General Terms and Conditions

Background

North American bats face unprecedented risks from continuing and emerging threats including white-nose syndrome (WNS), wind energy development, and climate change. These risks have highlighted the need to monitor changes in bat populations in response to these threats as well as assess management actions aimed at mitigating these threats. The need to monitor bats in North America has been recognized for many years but no coordinated program existed to monitor all bat species in North America prior to the establishment of the North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat). The purpose of NABat is to provide a continental-wide program to monitor bats at local to range-wide scales that will promote effective conservation decision-making and the long-term viability of bat populations across the continent. The mission of NABat is to provide the statistical, biological, and administrative architecture for coordinated bat population monitoring to support regional and range-wide inferences about changes in the distributions and abundances of bat populations facing current and emerging threats.

Purpose

A critical component of NABat is to ensure that data and information are managed so that they can be easily compiled and accessed for analyses. A centrally located and easily accessible database that ensures good data management is critical to the success of any program or effort that involves multiple organizations and spans large geographic areas. The NABat Partner Portal fills this need while also supporting ease of collaboration among partners. The NABat Partner Portal allows users to plan bat monitoring efforts, coordinate among partners, upload, archive and access their own data, query the database, and submit third party data requests to access data submitted by others.

Collaborators

Access to NABat Partner Portal features is limited to registered users. Anyone can freely register as a user on the NABat Partner Portal. By registering as a user, you are registering as a NABat Collaborator, and thus as a Collaborator with the U.S. Geological Survey who hosts and maintains the NABat Partner Portal. The USGS is authorized to collaborate with other federal agencies, units of state or local government, industrial organizations, private corporations, public and private foundations, and nonprofit organizations (including universities) under the Stevenson–Wydler Act (15 U.S.C. § 3710a, as amended). The USGS has a mission in Ecosystems to collect, manage, and share data and information to determine and report on the status and trends of bat species in North America to meet the needs of natural resource managers, policy-and decision-makers, researchers and the public. Data contributions from collaborators support this mission.

Intended Use

The USGS NABat Coordinating Office will use all data as part of published and unpublished annual and multi-annual assessments, analyses and reports, and program education and outreach materials. In assessments, reports, and other materials, all data will be reported at the grid cell level unless prior specific authorization is provided by the partner (see *Item Permissions* and *Data Sharing* below). Monitoring data may be used to generate publicly accessible species distribution maps, with distributions displayed at the grid cell level. NABat will utilize data in visualization tools on the public website that display data at the grid cell level. The NABat Coordinating Office will publicly share the inventory of database holdings on Partner Portal. These data summaries will convey the volume and type of data housed in the database and available to request. These summaries will include:

- Number of cells sampled each year by survey type and by species within a filtered area of interest
- Species detections each year by survey type within a filtered area of interest, delineating between ambiguous detections and confirmed detections

These summaries will NOT include or give access to:

- Project specific details
- Specific location details
- Row level data

The purpose of these data summaries is to allow users to explore the diversity and volume of data available by request in the NABat database. This is not a true presence absence map and these data summaries are not appropriate for assessing status and trends as they do not account for imperfect detection (false negatives), mis-classification error (false positives), observation error, or environmental stochasticity (randomness in biological processes). **Data accessed on the Partner Portal Data Inventory page do not satisfy agency consultation requirements under Section 7(a)(2) of the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.; ESA).** For consultation purposes in the U.S., use the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's IPaC program, or contact your local field office. To access data appropriate for status and trends or similar analyses, please create a data request.

8/17/2022

Data Storage

Data uploaded to the NABat Partner Portal are stored in a secure, enterprise-level database. The NABat Partner Portal has been constructed within [ScienceBase](#), a U.S. Geological Survey Trusted Digital Repository (TDR). The platform is developed and maintained by the USGS to provide shared, permission-controlled access to scientific data products and resources. Rather than serving merely as a generic online storage location, ScienceBase is designed to add value to digital data by presenting well-organized, documented datasets and scientific information over the web. ScienceBase supports nightly incremental and weekly full backups. This includes a nightly sync of content from the primary storage to secondary storage.

Barring unforeseen issues, the NABat Partner Portal will remain operational, with full access to all content and services, during regular business hours (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mountain Time). In most cases, the NABat Partner Portal is also fully operational during non-business hours; however, regular updates and maintenance do occur, sometimes resulting in limited system access. While rare, temporary outages may occur. In this event, the USGS NABat Coordinating Office will work closely with ScienceBase staff to resolve any issues as quickly as possible.

Prohibited Content

Users will refrain from uploading:

1. Sensitive personally identifiable information (PII). Please see http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104256 for additional information.
2. Fiscally sensitive information.
3. Copyrighted or other restricted materials, outside of permitted use.
4. Lewd or inappropriate materials.

API Interaction

In addition to the browser-based interface, the NABat Partner Portal supports powerful API access and interaction via [GraphQL](#). Access to project specific data will remain unchanged between the Partner Portal user interface and the GraphQL API. To access the API, users must log in to the Partner Portal, click 'About Partner Portal,' and click 'NABat GraphQL API.' Please contact the NABat Coordinating Office with any questions or for guidance related to advanced use.

Users can also use the North American Bat Monitoring Program: R Data Connection Package to extract data from and upload data to the Partner Portal through GQL API in R. This software package is written in R as a wrapper around the NABat GQL API and designed to facilitate the transfer of NABat data into/from the R environment. This code includes the ability to reformat NABat data, upload NABat data, create reports, find GRTS cells, and more (see vignettes in package). This code does not support modeling and analysis of data. Vignettes and Examples can be used to better understand/utilize the functionality of the code. Users may access data or connect to projects that they have permissions to in the [NABat Partner Portal](#). Because permissions are defined NABat Partner Portal user accounts, users must have a partner portal account to interact with the NABat API. Accounts can be created via the Partner Portal. To download and use the NABat: R Data Connection Package visit https://code.usgs.gov/fort/nabat/nabatr/-/blob/v1.0.0/README.md.

File Size Limitations

Funding and technical limitations restrict the size of files accepted by the NABat Partner Portal, both for individual file uploads and the overall size of a community or collection's content in ScienceBase. Currently, the primary limiting factor for larger uploads is internet bandwidth for the user. For assistance with larger uploads you can contact the NABat Coordinating Office or sciencebase@usgs.gov.

Item Permissions

NABat Partner Portal users are responsible for managing permissions for all their project files and data. Please note that NABat project items with controlled privacy access settings remain visible to NABat Coordinating Office staff.

Data Sharing

Because it is the responsibility of the NABat user to manage permissions and data access for their project(s), the user has the authority to restrict access to their project-level data or make data publicly available. The user has the following options to facilitate data sharing via the NABat Partner Portal:

Public data sharing

A data contributor can set the permissions for public access to data for each of their projects within the NABat Partner Portal, and these elections can be updated at any time. The NABat Coordinating Office strongly encourages public data sharing while acknowledging that certain information is considered sensitive and access may need to be restricted in some instances.

Within the Partner Portal project

Users may add members to their Partner Portal project with whom they wish to share project information, files and data. Permissions, ranging from view only to full edit access, can be set for these members. The NABat Coordinating Office is not responsible for any deletions or modifications made by other project members with write permissions to a Partner Portal project.

Third party data requests

Registered users wishing to access data from projects for which they are not members will be required to submit a data request through the NABat Partner Portal. To do so, requestors must create an account (if not already a registered NABat user), login to the NABat Partner Portal, and navigate to the 'Explore Public Data' via the 'Explore' tab. There, requesters can filter for data of interest and generate a request where they will be asked to write a short proposal describing their project, how data will be used, and intended outcomes and products. Requestors agree to include appropriate acknowledgment of and share any products derived from the data with the NABat Program. Once a request is submitted, the NABat Coordinating Office facilitates request for approval from the relevant Project Leaders. Approving Project Leaders will receive a notification describing each request that covers data from their project. Depending on Data Use and Sharing elections made in their project, the request will be either auto-approved or the Project Leader will be asked to provide an "approve" or "deny" response. If approved, the third-party requester will be provided a data package (not direct access to Partner Portal projects)

that can be downloaded at their convenience. The data package delivered to the requester contains:

- A CSV file of data from projects where access was approved
- A metadata file that defines each column in the CSV
- A README file with a recommended citation and additional details

A record of all requests is available on the 'NABat Data Requests' section of the 'Explore' tab on the Partner Portal, allowing others to identify the parameters of a request and potentially replicate it by submitting a request of their own.

It is expected that requestors communicate directly with data contributors to discuss intended use of data, potential misinterpretations/mis-use of data, and their capacity and desire to contribute to publications and products. Requestors are expected to acknowledge and share any products derived from these data with the NABat program, contributors and the conservation community.

FOIA

The NABat Coordinating Office at USGS will comply with the Federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The FOIA is a Federal statute which allows individuals to request access to federal agency records, except to the extent records are claimed as exempt from disclosure under one or more of the nine (9) exemptions of the FOIA.

- Exemption 1 protects properly classified information.
- Exemption 2 protects records that are "related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency."
- Exemption 3 protects information that has been "specifically exempted from disclosure by statute."
- Exemption 4 protects "trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential"
- Exemption 5 protects "inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters that would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency."
- Exemption 6 protects "personnel and medical files and similar files [where] the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy."
- Exemption 7 protects certain types of law enforcement information.
- Exemption 8 protects matters "contained in or related to examination, operating, or condition reports prepared by, on behalf of, or for the use of an agency responsible for the regulation or supervision of financial institutions."
- Exemption 9 protects "geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells."

Examples of relevant exemptions include Statute 54 USC §100707 (specific to the National Parks Service), which falls under Exemption 3 and states:

"Information concerning the nature and specific location of a System resource that is endangered, threatened, rare, or commercially valuable, of mineral or paleontological objects within System units, or of objects of cultural patrimony within System units, may be withheld from the public in response to a request under section 552 of title 5 unless the Secretary determines that— (1) disclosure of the

information would further the purposes of the System unit in which the resource or object is located and would not create an unreasonable risk of harm, theft, or destruction of the resource or object, including individual organic or inorganic specimens; and (2) disclosure is consistent with other laws protecting the resource or object."

Citation

Recommended citations will be provided in the README file when data are pulled from the database.

Data Liability Disclaimer

These data are preliminary or provisional and are subject to revision. They are being provided to meet the need for timely best science. The data have not received final approval by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and are provided on the condition that neither the USGS nor the U.S. Government shall be held liable for any damages resulting from the authorized or unauthorized use of the data.