<u>Frequently Asked Questions about Use of Standardized Spreadsheets for Reporting Bat Survey Data</u>
<u>Collected under ESA Section 10(A)(1)(a) Permits</u>

Q1: Why did the Service decide to implement electronic permit reporting for bat data? Will similar spreadsheets be implemented for other federally listed taxa in the future?

A1: Reporting bat survey data using our standardized spreadsheets allows us to efficiently validate and collate data, which will help us conduct more comprehensive and timely data analyses and ultimately allow us to make better informed decisions. With the success of the bat reporting spreadsheet, the Service is in the process of developing similar reporting methods for other taxa (e.g., freshwater mussels).

Q2: Why is there a different reporting spreadsheet for each region?

A2: Region specific spreadsheets reduces errors by limiting data entry options to specific regional values and automating some error checking. The spreadsheets look identical, but differ in the options provided in the dropdown menus, which allows for state, county, species name and location coordinate checking. For example, you can add a survey in Minnesota in the Region 3 spreadsheet, but attempting to add a survey in Vermont would result in an error. In the Region 5 spreadsheet, a survey can occur in Vermont, but a Minnesota survey would result in an error. Although each Service region has a different spreadsheet, the format and information required in each is identical.

Q3: How do I know which region's reporting form to use? Does it depend on where the work is conducted or which region issued my permit?

A3: The correct reporting spreadsheet you use is determined by where you are doing your survey. So a survey done in Region 3 should be reported using a Region 3 spreadsheet, even if the survey was done under a permit issued by Region 4. Using the wrong spreadsheet should generate error messages, so it should be quickly apparent if you are using an incorrect sheet. A map of Service regions is available online at www.fws.gov/about/regions.

Q4: Is there a goal to have a single rangewide reporting spreadsheet rather than regional spreadsheets? A rangewide sheet could make reporting easier for surveyors who work in several regions.

A4: At present, each Service region has a different permit reporting spreadsheet (see explanation above). A single spreadsheet would reduce the amount of error checking that could be done during data entry. Additionally, combining all of the Region-specific spreadsheets would lead to longer dropdown menus for species, states, counties etc. which could increase the time it takes to enter data.

Q5: Will this spreadsheet be used as the the annual report that is required by the permit?

A5: No. Annual reports, as described in permit terms and conditions, are still required. Submission of a completed spreadsheet does not mean a surveyor does not have to submit a written annual report - this is also stated in the spreadsheet instructions. The spreadsheet standardizes the format of some of the data required to be provided in annual reports, but is not a substitute for the full report.

Q6: Why does the spreadsheet not allow surveyors to distinguish net height? Typically field data sheets allow for the investigator to enter whether the net set is a singlehigh (1x), doublehigh (2X), or triple-high (3). If you treat all of these as a single net in your data sheet, then you wouldn't be able to

use the data to get capture rate per level of unit effort, which is typically by square meter of open net per hour. It might valuable to compare data of single, double, or triple high.

A6: In 2020 the Service revised the spreadsheet to include a field for Total Net Area, by doing this we can capture information on survey effort without requiring permittees to submit information on each individual net set.

Q7: If we are not conducting presence/absence surveys, do we need to report the acoustic data by night? On many of our projects, we will collect acoustic data from 30 to 100+ nights. In this case, it may be less timeconsuming to report these data by season, rather than on a nightly basis.

A7: We prefer that you report data using the data spreadsheets as designed. This best serves the goal of allowing for compilation of multiple datasets for analysis. Incorporating "seasonal" reporting into the current sheet would create a mismatch of data types that would reduce the effectiveness of the spreadsheet. We also believe there is value to understanding how the composition of bat calls changes throughout a season. This information will be unavailable if data are reported only by season. But we do not wish to unnecessarily burden surveyors that wish to contribute data. **If you are not working under a permit that requires nightly reporting**, we request you at least provide nightly data on listed species. If you would like to submit acoustic data, are not working under a permit that requires nightly reporting, and believe using this spreadsheet will be overly burdensome for reporting, please contact the field office where you will be doing the work to discuss alternative reporting options. Please remember, for acoustic detections it's only necessary to include species/groups where the MLE value is < 0.05 or the species/group was qualitative identified.

Q8: Will the Service notify federal permit holders when an updated version of the spreadsheet has been posted on the website? If not, then how often should we check the website for new versions of the spreadsheet?

A8: No, we will not be notifying permit holders of midseason updates. The spreadsheet has been in existence for several years and the Service is not anticipating additional revisions since the 2020 update. Should a new version be developed it will be available on the Service's Range-wide Indiana Bat and Northern long-eared Bat Survey Guidelines website.

Q9: Has the Service coordinated its new electronic permit reporting spreadsheet with its State agency counterparts? If so, has there been an effort to reduce redundancy in having to annually report similar or identical bat data to the Service and state agencies?

A9: We have shared our permit reporting approach with our state counterparts. The Service is seeking ways to reduce redundancies with state partners. At least one state does accept the Service spreadsheet in place of a separate state agency reporting system.

Q10: Will the Service be sharing bata data that permittees submit with the USGS' North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat) and/or its Bat Population Database (BPD) or should federal permittees plan to submit their data independently?

A10: The Service does share data generalized to the NABat grits cell. All Personal Identifiable Information and project specific information is removed prior to distribution to NABat.