

Jan 27 – Hazel Barton, University of Akron

Why does it feel as though the sky is falling? White-nose Syndrome in bats.

White-nose Syndrome is a disease that has swept through the North America bat population since it's discovery in 2006. Caused by an invasive fungus, this disease has infected bats in 25 states and led to the death of over 6 million animals, WNS is rapidly becoming one of the most devastating wildlife diseases in history.

Dr. Hazel A. Barton is an Associate Professor of Biology and Geosciences at the University of Akron. Her current research is geared toward understanding microbially driven geochemistry in cave environments, with funding from the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and US National Park Service to understand how bacterial adapt to the extreme isolation and nutrient limitation of caves. Through this work Dr. Barton's lab has been recognized as one of the 'top ten most awesome research labs' by Popular Science magazine in 2010, 2011 and 2013. Dr. Barton is also an avid caver, having explored caves on five continents, is a past director of the National Speleological Society (NSS), the Quintana Roo Speleological Survey, and an award winning cave cartographer. Her cave research has been featured in *Sports Illustrated*, *Forbes*, *National Geographic Explorer*, *Outside*, *Science News*, *The Scientist*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Wired*, *Geo* and *The Smithsonian* magazines, in the book *Extreme Scientists: Exploring Nature's Mysteries from Perilous Places*, on NPR and BBC Radio, on Animal Planet, the History Channel, the CBS Early Show, BBC TV and in the IMAX movie *Journey into Amazing Caves*. She is currently a Fellow of the National Speleological Society, a Kavli Fellow of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, and the recipient of an NSF CAREER Award.