

**AP® ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
2016 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 1

Read the following article from the *Fremont New Tribune*.

- (a) Diseases can devastate populations; however, most diseases do not drive their host to extinction.

Provide one explanation for why diseases seldom cause extinction.

(1 point for a correct explanation for why diseases seldom cause extinction)

- Genetic diversity in wild populations enables some resistant organisms to survive and reproduce.
- Disease organisms often co-evolve with their hosts, allowing the host to evolve adaptations that resist the disease.
- Disease organisms/pathogens that cause the extinction of their host population jeopardize their own survival.
- Initial deaths thin (reduce density of) populations and make the disease less likely to spread.

- (b) Dr. Serach suggests that even if the impact of WNS on little brown bat populations can be reduced and the extinction of the species avoided, the bat populations are likely to remain alarmingly small.

- (i) **Describe** TWO threats (other than WNS) to the survival of the bat species if the total number of bats becomes very small.

(2 points: 1 point for each description of a threat. Only the first two descriptions can earn a point.)

- Difficulty finding mates when populations are small, widely dispersed, or have a skewed sex ratio
- Competition from other species with a similar niche (e.g., nesting sites, food)
- Problems associated with a reduction of genetic diversity (small gene pool, lack of hybrid vigor, diseases that affect one will affect all members of the population, bottle-neck, etc.)
- Susceptibility to reduced fitness as a result of decreased protection by the group (e.g., not enough individuals to create heat, less protection by group members, increase in probability of becoming prey without the advantage conferred by group size)
- Increased vulnerability to environmental disturbances (need to name specific disturbance)

- (ii) If the little brown bat species does not become extinct and can potentially recover, the rate of recovery is likely to be slow. **Discuss** one aspect of bat biology that might slow the recovery of little brown bat populations to pre-WNS numbers.

(1 point for a correct discussion of a correct aspect of bat biology that might slow their recovery)

- Low fecundity/ few babies per year
- Advanced age at first reproduction
- Long generation times in bats
- Increased parental care

- (c) Bats are found in ecosystems around the world. **Describe** TWO ways in which other organisms in an ecosystem could be affected by a decline in a bat population.

(2 points: 1 point for each correct description. Only the first two descriptions can earn a point.)

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Question 1 (continued)

- Increase in bat food sources.
- Increase in West Nile and other insect-borne diseases
- Decline in plants pollinated or dispersed by bats
- Decline in bat predators due to decreased food supply.
- Decrease in the spread of rabies
- Increase in numbers of animals with similar food and habitat needs
- Decrease in fungus that causes WNS
- Causes a trophic cascade
- Decrease in bat guano (tied to organism)

- (d) The Eastern deciduous forest, in which the little brown bats live, is an important ecosystem.

Identify TWO ecosystem services that forests provide, and **explain** how each service benefits human society.

(2 points: 1 point for each correct ecosystem service with an explanation of how the service benefits human society)

Acceptable responses may include the following:

Ecosystem Service	Benefit to Humans
Resource material (tree/forest)	Lumber, building materials, fuel, paper, food
Oxygen production	Human respiration
Soil formation/protection	Forestry, agriculture, flood control, water quality
Protection of water supplies	Drinking water, recreation, irrigation, fishing
Habitat (e.g. specify shade, temperature moderation, etc.)	Animals or plants desired by humans for fishing, hunting, food
Biodiversity	Food, medicine, gene diversity, breeding stock
Carbon sink (sequestering)	Slows climate change
Aesthetics/cultural/social	Connection with nature (inspiration for art, music, poetry, etc.), research, education, recreation, tourism

WNS is an emerging disease in bats. Humans are also subject to emerging diseases, such as Ebola. A recent study suggests that the number of emerging infectious diseases affecting human populations has been steadily increasing in recent decades.

- (e) **Provide** a likely reason for the increase in emerging infectious diseases affecting human populations. Include an explanation for the reason you provided.

(2 points: 1 point for a correct reason for the increase in emerging infectious diseases. 1 point for a correct explanation of how the reason likely increases the emerging diseases affecting human populations.)

Acceptable responses may include the following:

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Reason for Increase	Explanation
Climate change, global warming	Allows pathogens and disease vectors to survive in places that were previously too cold or dry
Increase in global travel	Increased likelihood of contracting/spreading disease
Increased exposure to animals (zoonotic)	Changes in agricultural practices increase rodents, etc; trade in exotic species, intrusion into wild habitats, urban sprawl
Increase in population density/distribution	Increased likelihood of contracting /spreading disease from others
Lack of vaccinations	Increase human susceptibility to disease, reduce herd immunity
Antibiotic resistance	New disease strains evolve
Decrease in medical care/public health	Poverty, war, migration, human behavior (refusing to use condoms/sharing needles/refusing aid)

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