

**Bat Species of the Year 2018:**  
**The Lesser Horseshoe Bat**  
*(Rhinolophus hipposideros)*



Bat Species of the Year 2018: The lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) © Wolfgang Forstmeier

**The lesser horseshoe bat has been selected as ‘Bat Species of the Year 2018’ by BatLife Europe. Organisations in over 30 European countries will focus on promoting solutions**

**to conservation issues and on to raising public awareness about this lovely bat species in 2018.**

Many populations of lesser horseshoe bats in Europe have witnessed a dramatic decline during the last century due to loss of roosting sites, remedial timber treatment, loss of feeding habitats, and persecution. However, thanks to studies such as the European hibernating bat indicator, recent population trends show that the decline has slowed down and is even reversing in some parts of Europe. This is mainly due to the adoption of long term conservation actions on the field, implemented for the last 30 years by hundreds of bat workers everywhere in the continent. Despite this positive trend, the species is still absent in large, formerly occupied areas, and many actions are still needed to improve the stabilization of this species populations.

The lesser horseshoe bat is a very small species weighing only 4 to 7 g. Houses, churches and other buildings are used for their young to rear in summer. The preferred feeding habitats are woodland, hedgerows and orchards where lesser horseshoe bats hunt moths, crane flies, lacewings, and other insects. During winter this species can be found hibernating in caves, tunnels, mines and cellars.

Dr Jasja Dekker, Chair of BatLife Europe: “BatLife Europe and its members have chosen the lesser horseshoe bat as ‘Bat Species of the Year 2018’ because this tiny species needs our support to recover from its decline and to re-populate all potential areas. This species heavily depends on human activities because it uses buildings and other man-made structures as nursery roosts.”

BatLife Europe facilitates international communication and knowledge sharing in order to promote a successful co-existence for humans and bats.

- **Batlife Europe** is an international NGO built from a partnership of national bat conservation organisations committed to promoting the conservation of all bat species and their habitats throughout Europe. <http://www.batlife-europe.info>
- **UNEP/EUROBATS** is an international Agreement aiming to protect European bat species through legislation, education, conservation measures and international co-operation [www.eurobats.org](http://www.eurobats.org)