

Capacity Building on Bat Conservation in Albania

Written by Philippe Théou, team leader of the activity

The Workshop "Capacity Building on Bats Conservation ", held on 20 June 2014 at the Faculty of Natural Sciences in Tirana, has been the first workshop on bats conservation ever organized in Albania! The workshop was funded by the GIZ project CABRA and implemented by the Albanian NGO PPNEA, in collaboration with the Albanian Ministry of Environment, the University of Tirana, Club Eksplouresit, the Bulgarian NGO Green Balkan, and with the support of EUROBATS.

We had the pleasure to welcome more than 30 participants to this workshop, which was a great success. The participants included students from the Faculty of Natural Sciences in Tirana, representatives of cavers NGOs, bat workers from Montenegro as well as teaching staff from the University of Tirana. The idea of this workshop was to bring together people with different backgrounds : Some of the participants deal with caves but are not so aware about biodiversity, and those dealing with biodiversity are not so aware about caves.

The diversity of backgrounds and nationalities allowed to have constructive and interesting discussions about bats protection during the entire workshop. "We can learn by sharing" – the presentation of a study case on a cave in Bulgaria, Devetashka cave, was a great opportunity to show that NGOs and bat-workers can do a lot for bats and biodiversity protection in Balkan! This workshop was a good start of a strong and long collaboration between biologists and cavers, and a step forward for the cooperation in the Balkans in terms of bat conservation!

Following the workshop, a twenty-day-long expedition was organised to explore bat habitats and identify chiroptera species in Albania. About 15 persons, experts, students, cavers and bat enthusiasts, took part in this important expedition to extend the knowledge on bats in Albania.

During the expedition an assessment of caves was done in the visited areas, and in total 33 caves were explored, as well as many old bunkers. Following the visits, a proposal for an updated natural monuments list would be handed over to the Albanian Ministry of Environment.

In relation to bat identification, several techniques were utilized, such as mist-nets, bat detector, guano, and bone remaining. The team identified at least 17 species, from the 32 species actually recorded in Albania. In addition to this high number of species, the results also represent an important step forward for the knowledge on bat species repartition in

Albania. Furthermore, it was for the first time that data on bats have been collected in the protected areas of Pogradec and Korabi-Koritnik, as well as in the Has and the Shengjin area.

The bat monitoring initiative have been financially assisted by the GIZ funded project CABRA, supported by EUROBATS, and implemented by PPNEA.

<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> *	<i>Rhinolophus euryale</i>
<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> *	<i>Myotis emarginatus</i>
<i>Pipistrellus kuhli/nathusii</i> *	<i>Myotis myotis/blythii</i>
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	<i>Myotis sp.*</i>
<i>Hypsugo savii</i>	<i>Nyctalus noctula*</i>
<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>	<i>Nyctalus lasiopterus*</i>
<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>
<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	<i>Plecotus sp.*</i>
	<i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i>

*identified with D1000X bat detector

In the course of the project a leaflet on bats and caves in Albania was produced. Please find the English version [here](#).

There is also a short movie about the project available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbEnp9gGxg>

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