

6th Session of the Meeting of Parties

Prague, Czech Republic, 20 – 22 September 2010

Resolution 6.6

Guidelines for the Prevention, Detection and Control
of Lethal Fungal Infections in Bats



The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter “the Agreement”),

Recalling Article III, Paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Agreement;

Noting Resolution 9.8 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species of wild Animals: “Responding to the challenge of emerging and re-emerging diseases in migratory species, including Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1”;

Further noting concerns expressed at the 14th Meeting of the Advisory Committee to EUROBATS (see AC14 Record, pp 44-45);

Noting that since its discovery in a single hibernaculum in New York State in 2006, a cold adapted soil fungus, subsequently described as *Geomyces destructans*, has been associated with the death of over one million bats with White Nose Syndrome (WNS) involving all species hibernating underground in twelve states;

Further noting that caves and mines in government control in North America have been closed in affected states and private owners have been urged to follow suit;

Noting that speleological and bat conservation organisations in North America have made their respective communities aware of the need to disinfect clothes and equipment between cave visits;

Noting that *Geomyces destructans* was first identified in Europe in 2009 from a single bat in Périgueux, France (and has subsequently been found in five European countries) but has not been associated with bat deaths;

Noting guidelines available for the monitoring and management of the occurrence of *G. destructans* [variously on the websites of USGS, BCI, BCT & EUROBATS];

Recognising that action is needed

- To minimise the risk of *Geomyces destructans* from North America reaching European bat hibernacula,
- To monitor European hibernacula for the presence of fungi growing on bats, and
- To refer any such fungi for appropriate mycological investigation,
- If bat deaths occur, to minimise the spread of the fungus by human agency.

Urges Parties and Non-Party Range States to:

1. Ensure that the bat conservation and caving communities are aware of the threat associated with the fungal infection known as White Nose Syndrome in North America and encourage liaison between them.
2. Adopt measures to raise awareness among those visiting caves in North America or any other known centres of infection of their potential to act as vectors of *Geomyces destructans* to Europe.
3. Raise awareness among the operators of tourist caves in Europe of the potential of those who have visited caves in North America or any other known centres of infection to act as vectors of fungal infections affecting bats.
4. Encourage surveillance for the presence of fungal infections in bats.
5. Identify laboratories with facilities to identify skin fungi and refer any such fungi found on bats for identification.
6. Plan for the contingency that a lethal fungal disease becomes established in Europe, including precautionary measures to prevent its spread, such as closing to visitors caves and mines where bats hibernate.
7. To make best use of the scientific and technical findings and recommendations that can improve knowledge of lethal fungal infections and measures to prevent their spread.