

THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF POPULATIONS OF EUROPEAN BATS [EUROBATS]

NATIONAL REPORT TO AC 12

Ireland

2007

A. General Information

Name of party - Ireland

Date of Report - 24 April 2007

Period Covered - August 2006 – April 2007

Competent Authority - National Parks and Wildlife Service
Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
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Ireland

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Appointed member of the
Advisory Committee - Dr Ferdia Marnell

Abbreviations

BCIreland Bat Conservation Ireland
NPWS National Parks and Wildlife Service
EHS Environment and Heritage Service (N. Ireland)
SAP Species Action Plan

B. Status of Bats Within the Territory of the Party

1 Summary Details of Resident Species

No change since August 2006

2 Status and Trends

Population trend data is being collected on an annual basis for five of Ireland's bat species as part of the Irish Bat Monitoring Programme:

i) *Annual monitoring of Rhinolophus hipposideros at maternity and hibernation sites.*
NPWS staff monitored approximately 100 hibernation roosts in February 2007. Although analysis of the data is incomplete, early indications are that numbers are up on previous years.

ii) *Car-based transects.*

In 2006 the car transect programme was expanded to 26 squares including 3 in Northern Ireland, making it an international bat monitoring programme. This project collects robust data for 3 widespread species - *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *P. pygmaeus* and *Nyctalus leisleri*. The data gathered in 2006 show that *P. nathusii* is rapidly expanding its range across Ireland, with records from 10 survey squares, compared to only 1 square in 2005 (see Fig 1). Bat Conservation Ireland [BCIreland] manages this project for NPWS.

iii) *Waterways survey*

This survey, aimed principally at Daubenton's bat, was rolled out across Ireland in 2006, with the cooperation of the Environment and Heritage Service (N.I.). There was considerable interest in the project from members of the public and 207 people attended training courses during June and July 2006. 134 waterways were surveyed (122 of them were surveyed twice) during August 2006. Daubenton's bat was recorded at 91% of the sites surveyed. BCIreland manages this project for NPWS.

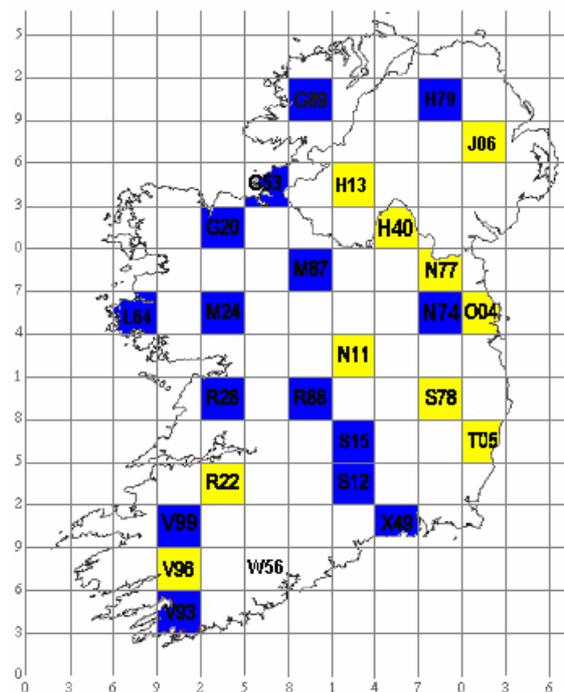


Fig. 1 The 30 km squares being surveyed in the all-Ireland car-based bat monitoring programme. *P. nathusii* was recorded in the **Yellow** squares during the 2006 survey.

3 Habitats and Roost Sites

No developments since August 2006.

4 Threats

No developments since August 2006.

5 Data collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination

Data collection is ongoing. BCIreland is developing a centralised database for bat distribution information with assistance from NPWS. These data can be viewed at www.batconservationireland.org

C Measures Taken to Implement Article III of the Agreement

6 Legal Measures

All bats in Ireland are protected under the Wildlife Acts [1976 and 2000] which make it an offence to deliberately kill or injure any bat species or to damage its roosts. Conservation Rangers from the NPWS of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government police this act throughout the country. Approximately 12 - 15 licences are issued each year under the Wildlife Acts to facilitate bat research and bat surveys e.g. to undertake mist netting or radio-tagging studies.

As provided for under the EU Habitats Directive, derogations for the disturbance or destruction of bat roosts are issued, subject to strict criteria, under Article 25 of *European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997*.

7 Sites identified and protected

No developments since August 2006.

8 Consideration given to important bat habitats

No developments since August 2006.

9 Activities carried out to promote the awareness of the importance of the conservation of bats

Bat Conservation Ireland is continuing to grow and develop and is working on a number of projects with NPWS [see their website: www.batconservationireland.org].

10 Responsible bodies nominated for the provision of advice on bat conservation and management.

NPWS is the body responsible for the provision of advice on bat conservation and management. NPWS has recently published "*Bat mitigation guidelines for Ireland*", a guidance document (adapted from English Nature's *Bat mitigation guidelines*) for local

authorities, developers and their consultants. This report has been widely circulated in Ireland and can be downloaded from the NPWS website [www.npws.ie].

11 Additional action undertaken to safeguard populations of bats.

See D 14 below.

12 Recent and ongoing programmes relating to conservation and management of bats.

See B. 2 above.

13 Consideration being given to effects of pesticides on bats.

No further developments in this area.

D Functioning of Agreement

14 Co-operation with other Range States

There is close cooperation between NPWS and EHS in Northern Ireland; a number of bat monitoring schemes are now being conducted on an all-Ireland level. NPWS and EHS have also drafted a joint species action plan (SAP) for bats. This SAP covers the nine species of vesper bat found in Ireland. The SAP has been through a period of inter-Departmental consultation and is now out to public consultation (see www.npws.ie). A finalised plan will be published during summer 2007.

15 Measures taken to implement MoP Resolutions

Resolution 4.9 Protection of overground roosts

Dr Ferdia Marnell convenes the IWG set up at AC9 to address this resolution. This working group reported to MoP 5 and a further resolution was adopted encouraging Parties and non-party range states to adopt listed measures to improve the protection of bats in buildings of cultural heritage importance and to enhance cooperation between built heritage and natural heritage authorities.
