

## 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

Stockholm, Sweden, 27 April 2017

### Summary Report on the Outcomes of EPI projects conducted in 2016



#### **1. *Plecotus sardus* on Sardinia (Italy)**

Grantee: Trier University, Faculty of Regional and Environmental Sciences, Dept. of Biogeography. Project coordinator: Gaetano Fichera, Italy. EPI funding in 2016: EUR 4,994.

Started in 2014, the project foresaw an extensive bat survey on Sardinia with goal to collect data on different aspects of ecology, biology and conservation of *Plecotus sardus*, an endemic endangered species (it was assessed as Vulnerable B2ab by IUCN in 2008). Only 4 nurseries with an estimated population of less than 1.000 individuals had been known before. Two new roosts of this species were discovered using radio-tracking technique; one of these, a cave in the "Lago Omodeo" area, is the first known hibernaculum for *P. sardus*. The first data on foraging habitats of the species was also obtained. Preliminary results of the DNA analyses show that at least two mitochondrial haplogroups of *P. sardus* exist on Sardinia. This may be either the result of ongoing separation on two populations or consequences of a historic split.

Main project results alongside conservation implications are reflected in a paper published in Hystrix Journal and available online at

[http://www.italian-journal-of-mammalogy.it/article/view/11788/pdf\\_11788](http://www.italian-journal-of-mammalogy.it/article/view/11788/pdf_11788)

#### **2. Survey of distribution and conservation status of bats in Armenia**

Grantee: Armenian association of mammalogists. Project coordinator: Astghik Ghazaryan, Armenia. EPI funding in 2016: EUR 4,575.

The project was aimed at collating faunal data applying a nation-wide bat survey, for the first time since the dissolution of USSR. Nine trips were conducted in several Armenian regions; all available information on bats and their roosts in the country was also considered for preparation of distributional maps for each bat species. This information will report to Ministry of Nature protection to include the information in the new edition of Red Data Book of Armenia (a national list of legally protected species). During the field trips, 166 individuals were mistnetted and 1186 individuals acoustically identified as belonging to 13 different species. Several students were involved in the fieldwork.

Alongside with the scientific survey, public lectures in local schools and training courses for authorities were organised, highlighting vulnerability of local bat communities and the necessity of their conservation. News featuring the project team was broadcasted by regional television, 500 booklets and 500 calendars were distributed in schools of Armenia.

### **3. Capacity building for the development of the guidelines for wind farm construction based on field study in Macedonia (2016-2017)**

Grantee: Bat Study Group, Bird Protection Macedonia. Project coordinator: Branko Micevski, Macedonia. EPI funding in 2016: EUR 5,090.

The primary aim, by the realised Project was to fill the gap/absence of information regarding bats inhabiting the area of the first Wind Farm in Macedonia (up to 5 km distance) thus to confirm the necessity for appropriate operational monitoring to be done. The state power plant company ELEM, who manage this first wind farm in Macedonia, denies a need in monitoring in the ESIA report. During monthly surveys of bats near the Wind Farm Bogdanci, the project team confirmed presence of 14 bat species and one important underground roost in St. Nedela cave (see the picture below). Four species are having high IUCN status and *Nyctalus lasiopterus* represents a new species for the fauna of Macedonia. The project will continue in 2017 to draft and then submit to all stakeholders the national guidelines supplementing recommendations of the EUROBATs Publication No. 6. The results clearly demonstrate that post-construction monitoring of bat mortality is essential at Bogdanci WF.

### **4. The “Carol” line: Assessing importance of at least 150 deserted bunkers for the conservation of the Romanian-Hungarian cross-border bat fauna (2016-2017)**

Grantee: Romanian Bat Protection Association. Project coordinator: Szilárd Bücs, Romania. EPI funding in 2016: EUR 6,000.

After the completion of the summer and autumn field work, the project demonstrated the presence of 11 bat species along the Carol fortified line, including three focal species: *B. barbastellus*, *M. myotis* and *R. ferrumequinum*. However, no nursery colony was discovered, since these bunkers do not provide suitable microclimatic conditions for the formation of “warm” nurseries.

The Southern Carol line has the highest species diversity along the fortified line, with 8 species present. The Northern Carol line ends at a high quality and diverse feeding habitat, with an artificial lake and deciduous forest, where, among others, the presence of *M. daubentonii* and *P. nathusii* was proven. The winter survey will be finalised in 2017

besides checking twice the most promising 17 sites (which have great potential to offer roosts to several bat species, including *R. hipposideros*), will also recheck the full Carol line, to discover previously overgrown during the summer entrances.

Preliminary results and pictures are available online in English and Romanian at <http://lilieci.ro/en/colony-blog/carol-fortified-line-ruin/>

### **5. *Nyctalus lasiopterus* in the far north? Population size and habitat use of a maternity colony in the Pripiat floodplains in the south of Belarus (2016-2017).**

Grantees: SUN Allianz für Säugetiere (Germany) and APB-BirdLife (Belarus) . Project coordinator: Valery Dombrovski, Belarus. EPI funding in 2016: EUR 5,000.

During the cold winter season, forest areas on Pripiat plan are susceptible to forestry activities; logging is a serious problem for the natural forests also as for tree dwelling bats. The main project's target is to confirm an importance of the Pripiat floodplain for migratory bat species and in particular for the Greater Noctule, one of the rarest and understudied European bats. During the first year, phenology of arrival and departure to breeding area as well as the night activity were assessed using automated bat detectors (Batlogger M, Batcorder 3). In the same time, 4 lactating female bats were tagged and tracked using VHF transmitters; 7 breeding and transition roosts were found in old trees not far from places of capture.

Acoustic surveys were also conducted at 55 potential habitats of the Greater Noctule in 7 districts of Belarus but yielded no results. Preparation of necessary documents for the formal protection of discovered breeding sites of *N. lasiopterus* has started.

The second phase of the project continues in 2017.