Dear readers of the Eurobat Chat,

This issue of the Eurobat Chat is a very special one as it documents 10 years of the Agreement’s work on bat conservation. In 2001 we celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the conclusion of the EUROBATS Agreement. Now, even more important, we celebrate its entry into force, which was in 1994. Since then bat conservation and research has gained a fully new dimension all over Europe. Many of our colleagues and friends from the now 30 Parties to the Agreement as well as from Non-Party Range States have sent their contributions to this issue. Thank you very much!

Beside the success stories from many countries we shall also report about the major achievements of the 4th Session of the Meeting of Parties. The work programme of the Agreement has reached an incredible scope resulting in the need of 12 Intersessional Working Groups for its implementation. The success of EUROBATS as a prototype agreement has meanwhile led to enhanced efforts to conclude similar agreements in other regions of the world. Right now Africa is a strong candidate. Let’s keep our fingers crossed!

All this just became possible thanks to the fathers and mothers of the EUROBATS Agreement (many of them still working with us) and all the dedicated experts as well as Non-Governmental Organisations all over Europe. Thanks to them EUROBATS became a flagship agreement in the family of the global Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (UNEP/CMS). Thank you so much for everything. I hope you will enjoy reading this new issue of the Eurobat Chat.

Andreas Streit  
Executive Secretary of UNEP/EUROBATS

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the AC9 Record) on www.eurobats.org under the link “Official documents” / “Meeting reports”. The most important topics are summarised here below.

Data compilation on important underground habitats for bats and Guidelines for their protection and management

The Parties recognised the importance of underground habitats to many species of bats and their threat by a wide variety of anthropogenic factors. Therefore the MoP4 decided that Parties who have not yet done so should identify important underground habitats for bats and ensure their full protection by law as well as physical protection against unauthorised entry.

It was agreed during AC9 to close the list of important underground sites on 1 January 2005 but to review it in 5 years time to assess new information.

Draft Guidelines for the Conservation and Management of Underground Habitats for Bats already exist (in English) and it is planned to publish these Guidelines as the first issue of a series of EUEROBATS publications. The EUROBATS Secretariat is currently working on the translations into German, French and Bulgarian and hopes to be able to provide the publications in the different languages before the next AC Meeting.

Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management

The MoP4 recognised the importance of forests for bats and decided i.a. that Parties should identify key areas and key elements for bats in forests, which should be protected, restored and enhanced. Forestry should be combined with bat conservation, and research should be promoted on the relationship between bat communities and forest types as well as the impact of forestry. (For more background information on this topic see also the article by Dr. Peter Boye on page 4). Existing information on bat conservation in forests should be collated and provided also in other languages. A respective initiative is under way at the moment: a German leaflet on bats in forests provided to other European countries was already translated and published by Romania. The Czech Republic and Serbia & Montenegro are about to do so soon, and Ireland will incorporate the leaflet information into a web-based information sheet for foresters. Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia and FYR Macedonia have also expressed their interest in this initiative.

Guidelines for the Use of Remedial Timber Treatment

The MoP4 decided that Parties should endeavour to get data on potential impact of timber treatment products on bat populations, to share this information with other countries and to bring it to the attention of the users of such products. New pesticides should be assessed for their toxicity to bats and the use of any that are likely to be a significant hazard should not be permitted.

Guidelines for the Issue of Permits for the Capture and Study of Captured Wild Bats

All activities related to bat capture, ringing and marking should require licences issued for a fixed (renewable) term. The license should be issued by designated nature
conservation authorities (if necessary after consultation with a body, which is competent in the study of bats and their conservation) upon a written application outlining the reasons for the proposed project. Licence holders should demonstrate competence in the activities to be licensed in order to be able to keep standards set by the licensing authority. The licence should identify permitted techniques and equipment, incorporate the obligation for a reporting procedure, and may restrict the carrying out of certain activities. Parties should not provide support for projects involving capture or marking in Range States, which do not have policies that comply with these guidelines.

The guidelines have been adopted at MoP4, but a possible review is scheduled for AC11 in 2006.

Wind Turbines and Bat Populations

The MoP4 requested the Advisory Committee to assess the evidence of the impacts of wind turbines on bat populations and, if appropriate, to develop guidelines for such assessments. Until this task is completed, the Parties and Range States should take full account of the precautionary principle in the development of wind turbine plants. Furthermore, attention should be paid to bats in planning processes relating to the positioning of wind turbines, especially along migration routes and in areas of particular value to bat populations. Parties and Non-Party Range States are encouraged to initiate and support further investigations as well as research on the impact of wind turbines on bats. The first steps of the newly established Intersessional Working Group on bats and wind turbines are the collection and analysis of existing data and the evaluation of its own questionnaire, which will be circulated to all Range States before the next Advisory Committee Meeting in 2005. If appropriate, guidelines will be drafted afterwards.

Amendment of the Annex to the Agreement

At MoP4, the Parties decided to amend the Annex, which had been incorporated to the Agreement during the MoP3 in 2000 in Bristol, United Kingdom, by including several newly described European bat species. The Annex was changed according to the rules laid down by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. A small Advisory Panel of taxonomic specialists will continue to review potential changes to the Annex in future.


The MoP4 adopted the new BCMP, which sets the priorities for bat conservation for the period 2003 – 2006. Beside many topics for which separate resolutions were adopted (underground sites, forest practices etc., see above), it was i.a. decided to review the impact of anti-parasitic drugs for livestock on bat populations, to produce guidelines on monitoring methodologies as well as on the consideration of bats’ requirements in all cases of land management and development. The geographical scope of the Agreement is another subject of the BCMP; it incorporates further data collection on bat migration and the conservation of migratory species (see also article on the Migration Atlas Project on page 16).

Beside the resolutions dedicated to bat conservation, the MoP4 also adopted administrative ones, which lead to important progress for the EUROBATS Secretariat:

Legal personality of the EUROBATS Secretariat

The Meeting of the Parties formally endorsed the so-called Headquarters Agreement between the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), the German Government and the United Nations, which - pursuant to the Agreement itself - shall also be applied to the EUROBATS Secretariat. This Agreement ensures the Secretariat’s functioning as it provides its legal personality, which means that the Secretariat has its own rights and obligations including the legal capacity to contract, acquire and dispose of property and institute legal proceedings in Germany.

Secretariat’s staff

The MoP4 agreed on the establishment of a new part-time post of a Secretary starting 1 January 2004. Therefore the EUROBATS Secretariat now consists of three regular posts: the post of the Executive Secretary, the one of the Administrative Assistant (which is currently divided into two 50% posts) and the new part-time Secretary post. To read more news about EUROBATS staff see page 22.

The MoP4 adopted further resolutions on “Contributions to the CBD/CMS Joint Work Programme”, “Recognising the Important Role of NGOs in Bat Conservation” and “Priority Species for Autecological Studies”.

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The 10th Meeting of the Advisory Committee of EUROBATS will take place on 25—27 April 2005 in Bratislava, Slovak Republic.
European Workshop on Bat Rabies

European bat rabies viruses (Lyssaviruses) pose an extremely low (but significant) risk to humans. The general public as well as bat workers should be aware of this risk and more information should be exchanged on this matter. Upon an initiative of the United Kingdom during the 4th Meeting of Parties in 2003, the EUROBATS Secretariat organised an European Workshop on Bat Rabies, which was held in conjunction with the 9th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 16 May 2004. The objectives of the workshop were:

- Harmonisation of data collection systems.
- Collection of minimum information on the testing of bats across Europe and a system for dealing with the problems of species identification.
- Wider explanation of the data collected including species-specific issues.
- Agreement on standards for national databases to enable correct reporting to the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- Improvement of understanding of vaccination procedures.
- Improvement of public awareness on this issue.

Many experts on bat rabies as well as on bat conservation attended the Workshop. Lectures were given on European bat lyssaviruses, bat data collection and virus testing as well as data management. The various topics were discussed in different Working Groups and later in the plenary. In the end, advice was given on vaccination, virus testing and passive surveillance of bat rabies; the presented surveillance sheet and the database of bat and testing data were approved as models to be used on regional or national basis. Furthermore, main education points were compiled: 1. What to do in case of a bat biting incident? 2. How to handle bats when confronted with them and how to seek help?

The Executive Secretary of EUROBATS, Andreas Streit, noted that the workshop had been an important initial step to improve the international co-operation on bat rabies research and data collection. He thanked the Governments of the United Kingdom, Luxembourg and Germany for their generous voluntary contributions to make this Workshop possible.

The complete report of this Workshop is available on the EUROBATS website under “Official Documents” => “Meeting reports”.

Increasing attention for bats in forests

By Dr. Peter Boye, Germany

The conservation of bats in European forests became a subject of joint international activities under the EUROBATS Agreement. It started in 1998 when the former Executive Secretary Eric Blencowe initiated a MoP2-Resolution on a transboundary project to develop guidelines for bat-friendly forestry practices. During the following years there were a lot of relevant activities on national level. Germany for example published a comprehensive report and an information leaflet on the ecology and conservation of bats in forests. After MoP3 an Inter-sessional Working Group (IWG) of the Advisory Committee compiled information and developed a strategic plan for the introduction of bat conservation ideas to forestry management. The IWG consisted of members from six countries and with the help of the EUROBATS Secretariat they were able to meet in Zagreb, Croatia, in September 2002. One of the results of this workshop was the Draft Resolution No. 4.4, which was once again revised and finally adopted during MoP4.

A review of the bat fauna in Europe shows that all bat species use woodlands as habitat to some extent. Some of them are real forest species, which forage, roost, mate and in some cases even hibernate in forests, e.g. Myotis bechsteinii, Nyctalus leisleri and Barbastella barbastellus. To improve the conservation status of bats in woodlands it is necessary to take care of roost trees and forest areas, which are highly important for bats because of abundant prey or specific structural features. Among others, Resolution No. 4.4 encourages EUROBATS Parties to identify and protect such key elements and key areas for
bats in forests. To promote co-operation with other international nature conservation programmes and the forestry sector Resolution No. 4.4 further directed the Advisory Committee to investigate the possibilities to use bats as indicators for sustainable forestry and biodiversity in European woodlands. In May 2004 a new IWG was established and started to work on this ambitious target.

Meanwhile the need of bat-friendly forestry practices is communicated on local, national and international levels. In many EUROBATS Parties and Range States awareness is growing and bats in woodlands are investigated more intensively. In the United Kingdom woodland managers and bat conservationists came together to review the current situation in British forests. At least Finland, Italy, Norway, Romania and Sweden published special leaflets on bat conservation in forests and other countries will follow with support of the EUROBATS Secretariat. Thanks to EUROBATS’ Executive Secretary Andreas Streit the subject is also recognised by CMS, CBD and UNEP. The next challenge is to approach the forestry sector on all levels to focus their attention on bats and the species’ values for woodland ecosystems and sustainable forestry management.

Research on bats in forests: Sharing the experience from Bulgaria and the knowledge from Central Europe

By Boyan P. Petrov, Bulgaria

Between 10 and 14 June 2004 a workshop of this name took place in Ropotamo Reserve (Bulgarian Black Sea Coast south of Burgas). The workshop was organised by me and Gerald Kerth and it was the last event in the co-operative project between the University of Zürich and the National Museum of Natural History in Sofia. The project “Ecology, behaviour and population genetics of the forest living Bechstein’s bat (Myotis bechsteinii) in Europe” started in 2001 and officially ended in August 2004.

The main goal of the workshop was to share practical experience in the study of forest living bats with students and young researchers who work with bats in Balkan’s woodlands.

Several invited experts (Dr. Gerald Kerth - Univ. Zürich, Dr. Eric Petit - Univ. Rennes, Dr. Arjan Boonman - Univ. Tübingen and Dr. Teodora Ivanova - NMNH Sofia) shared their experience with modern research methods and bat monitoring techniques. Thirteen students and researchers from Bulgaria, Turkey, Serbia and Germany presented different bat projects and worked together in the field during several days and nights.

The main topics of the workshop were: Species composition of forest dwelling bats, their ecology and behaviour and interactions between species. Finding and inspecting bat roosts, access techniques, mist-netting, radiotelemetry and setting bat boxes in “natural forests” were the main activities during the field work. Besides mist-netting in the oak and mixed forests along the Black Sea coast we radio-tracked a female Bechstein’s bat, which led us to its breeding roost. We also visited a coastal bat cave at the Cape Maslen Nos where several thousand M. blythii/myotis, M. capaccinii and Miniopterus schreibersii were breeding. More than 50 bat boxes hanging in the reserve were checked and cleaned.

Research on forest living bats is still a challenging task because of the low capture rate compared to bats living in caves and mine galleries. In the Balkan region, monitoring of the forest dwelling bats is not well organised yet. This raises the need of sharing the research knowledge and techniques between local students and researchers and those from Western Europe. By doing this, our workshop attempted to initiate the development of a regional co-operation for conservation and research on forest dwelling bats in different Balkan countries.

The workshop was funded by the SCOPES program of the Swiss National Science Foundation.
Bat conservation in Romania

By Abigel and Farkas Szodoray-Paradi, Romania

In 2002 we have begun with the help of Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) from UK to work out the basis of a Sustainable Bat Monitoring in Romania. The Bat Conservation Trust assists Romania with implementing obligations under the European Bats Agreement. The project, which was funded by the UK Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as a voluntary contribution to the EUROBATS Agreement, involved Romanian bat experts and the government to develop a National Bat Conservation Strategy for Romania and a National Bat Monitoring Programme.

The implementation of the National Bat Monitoring Programme needs three steps: training for trainers, involving volunteers in bat monitoring, beginning of the monitoring of the key species.

The first objective training for trainers was achieved by holding several workshops where experts from Western European countries were invited to hold lessons in bat issues.

In September 2002 the BCT in conjunction with the Romanian Bat Protection Association and the Transylvanian Museum Association held a workshop about National Bat Monitoring Programme and Bat Detector Techniques in Danube Delta, Romania. The workshop outlined the main bat monitoring techniques, the structure and functionality of a Bat Monitoring Programme, and bat detector training including analysing recorded sounds.

Another workshop was held in Rimetea, Romania (June 2003) where the participants from Belgium, The Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, Ukraine and United Kingdom of the International Bat Monitoring Workshop shared their experience about the monitoring of bats in underground sites. Discussions resulted in the basis of a cave monitoring protocol and methods, which will be further developed at European scale.

The next step was the volunteer involvement. During the past years the Romanian Bat Protection Association provided trainings to twenty different organisations and in 2004 (see pages 8-9). A further workshop is planned in the Czech Republic in early 2005 to discuss underground survey and monitoring techniques.

Amy Coyte, Chief Executive of BCT, says “The EUROBATS Agreement has been a great driver for developing collaborative work. We as an organisation have learnt a great deal through this process and I personally have enjoyed meeting and working with our bat colleagues.”
institutions. In total more than 350 participants have taken part in our trainings, and 278 of them have subscribed to the lists of participants. In this way we can keep contact with them in the future.

Some volunteers who had taken part at training courses were involved in the winter surveys. Thus the theoretical courses were connected with practical field experience. In the future, these territories could be covered by the volunteers. The winter surveys were co-ordinated by members of Romanian Bat Protection Association.

In summer 2003 we could organise two workshops with the help of the Rufford Small Grant where more than 30 persons were invited and trained to have basic knowledge of bat monitoring and research. Also in the frame of this project the monitoring of 4 bat species was started. The monitoring was made together with the new volunteers already involved. For each of the participants we prepared training material and a CD about identification of bats, which was done for the first time in Romanian language. Additionally, we gave bat detectors to those persons who are active in bat research. This project was popularised by the media: by national and international TV and by newspapers.

With the help of the Rufford Small Grant, in this year (2004) we could manage the project “Networking of the Volunteers in the Romanian Bat Monitoring Programme”. In the frame of this project we held trainings in order to prepare our volunteers to be able to lead themselves an NGO and to find the right solution in the case of a problem concerning bat disturbing in their living area. In summer we organised two workshops where the participants learnt about bats behaviour, lifecycle, monitoring and protection strategies.

Also we continued the monitoring of cave dwelling bats in the 35 caves, which are included in the National Bat Monitoring Programme.

With the financial support of Bat Conservation International (BCI), in 2003 our NGO ran a project that was concentrated in the territory of Retezat National Park, Piatra Craiului Natural Park and Vanatori Neamt Natural Reserve. During the workshops we researched the bat fauna of the National Parks. As a result we succeeded to complete the existing list of bat species in all three National Parks.

In partnership with BCT we continued this year (in 2004) the volunteer involvement programme by connecting the NGOs and Universities who will help in the organisation of the trainings. The trainings have started in September 2004 and will be finished by March 2005. We are going to hold trainings to 25 of our volunteers and 15 lectures in different Romanian cities to members of environmental NGOs, students and foresters. We expect participants from five Romanian University centres.

Our activities also include actions concerning the public awareness. One of our recent projects in this regard was the “Knowing them, protecting them - bats of Romania” project. Its goal was to raise the public attention in 5 big Romanian cities about the necessity of the protection of bats in the frame of European Bat Nights. The project is running in partnership with The Bat Conservation Trust and is supported by the Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation and DEFRA.

Parallel with the volunteer involvement we started the monitoring of the key species in order to achieve a Sustainable Bat Monitoring System in Romania.

In this way we succeeded to check out the situation of Miniopterus schreibersii and Rhinolophus ferrumequinum during the hibernation period by visiting the caves in winter. In total 40 underground habitats of these species were visited twice; in the field trip 12 new volunteers took part beside our working group.

Survey works were implemented by our NGO in the frame of different projects: “Together for bats” programme, supported by Fauna & Flora International.

The goal of the project was the conservation of Greater horseshoe bats in the Carpathian basin, Romania. In order to achieve this goal we surveyed the spreading area of this species and charted the distribution of its colonies.
After the survey of colonies and the assessment of the endangering factors we made concrete protection measures. Summarising our results: 41 caves were checked which were used by bats as hibernation places. In 30 caves we found more than 3000 individuals of Greater horseshoe bats. The biggest sizes of colonies were with 930, 889 and 422 individuals. In 12 caves colonies with 10-100 individuals could be found and in six more than 100.


During 10 months the team has conducted a summer and a winter survey for 48 caves. These activities were connected with popularisation of bat conservation, through spreading leaflets and holding educational workshops. A database was built using unpublished and literature data of distributional records about 64 caves. Distribution maps and population status description for 19 bat species were provided. During surveys we recorded more than 85,000 specimens of 17 bat species. According to IUCN, from these species 7 are vulnerable and 4 species are near threatened. New distribution records were established for *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, *Rh. hipposideros*, *Rh. euryale*, *M. myotis/blythii*, *M. emarginatus*, *M. brandtii*, *M. nattereri*, *Plecotus austriacus*, *Pl. auritus*, *Barbastella barbastellus* and *Eptesicus serotinus*. We could offer an estimation for the population size of *Rh. ferrumequinum*, *Rh. hipposideros*, *Rh. euryale*, *M. myotis/blythii*, *M. capaccinii* and *Miniopterus schreibersii*. We identified and described 10 key sites as important for bat conservation on regional and international level. In co-operation with the Institute of Speleology of the Romanian Academy of Science we made a proposal for obtaining protection status for important bat roosts: 10 caves within the target territories.

These surveys were supported by British Petrol (BP). The project team (Romanian and Polish students) collaborated during the programme with different national NGOs, as the Romanian Bat Protection Association, institutions and other international partners.

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"Our first meeting with BCT was in 2001 and from that year we have been working continuously together running several joint projects in bat protection and research. The National Bat Monitoring Programme in Romania was initiated by BCT and the staff helped us in the whole process (training for trainers, volunteer involvement, field trips). We also enjoyed meeting the UK bat workers at the UK conference where we had the possibility to present our results in volunteer recruiting, and we could share knowledge with the people from UK who are interested in bat protection and bat research. The work with the Bat Conservation Trust was extremely valuable and I hope that in future this work will be continued." (Quote from Abigel Szodoray-Paradi)

The BCT is delighted to work with Romanian colleagues and to assist to meet EUROBATS resolutions on sharing knowledge and developing monitoring programmes. The recruitment and training of so many volunteers lays a firm foundation for future bat conservation in Romania and we hope that new projects can be developed which harness this volunteer effort (see also previous article).

Moving further eastwards, the BCT has been involved in another project in the Caucasian region in 2004: The training workshop on “Bat Detectors and Monitoring Methods” was convened on 17-20 June, 2004 in Ckaltubo, Georgia. It was organised by the Georgian NGO “Field Researchers’ Union (Campester)” in close co-operation with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT).

The workshop was funded via EUROBATS through a generous grant from the UK’s Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). WWF Netherlands and the Dutch organisation "Milieukontakt Oost-Europa"
made additional generous donations to the workshop to enable the purchase of bat detectors that were presented to participating countries.

The workshop was attended by field researchers, scientists, speleologists, forestry workers and bat experts from governmental and non-governmental organisations representing four countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia. The Workshop was led by invited resource persons - Colin Catto (BCT / UK) and Herman Limpens (VZZ / NL).

The main goal of the Workshop was to enable countries to meet EUROBATS resolutions on sharing knowledge/experiences of methods for monitoring bats and also to provide training in how to use bat detectors as effective survey and monitoring tools.

Main topics covered in workshop lectures included: Approaches to bat conservation in the UK and the Netherlands, monitoring experiences and examples of monitoring programmes, involvement of volunteers and capacity building for bat NGOs. Participants discussed standard recording forms for recording hibernating bats and a proposal to survey caves and involve more people in bat conservation in the Caucasian region.

Fieldwork enabled practical demonstrations of using detectors to identify bats and also to carry out survey work. A total of 12 species were identified with bat detectors and another probable species in addition. This was the first record of Hypsugo savii and the second record for Nyctalus lasiopterus. M. capaccinni was identified provisionally though further work is required for a positive identification. In addition, a number of caves and structures were surveyed. Some of the sites contained breeding sites of internationally important species: Rhinolophus ferrumequinum, R. euralye, R. hipposideros, Myotis blythii, M. emarginatus and M. schreibersii. At 2 cave sites potential problems connected to proposed development were identified.

Bat biodiversity in Georgia is amazing. However, threats that could impact important breeding sites are evidenced, and prompt action is required to achieve a balance of development and biodiversity. It is significant to stress that during our field trip we identified that a mixed colony of species occurring in one of the important underground sites – Natlismcemeli Monastery - is threatened by reconstruction development. It is planned to apply to the Head of this Monastery and to discuss this question to avoid threats on bat species.

Furthermore, short discussions with local people from the village Kumistavi produced a very positive response. Now they have a positive attitude towards bat protection and are willing to be involved in conservation activities.

We have to highlight that during the workshop a draft regional project on “Cave Bats Species Survey and Monitoring, including Public Awareness Campaign” was developed. Participants pointed out that this draft regional project is one of the most valuable results following this event.

Participants found the workshop very interesting and they enjoyed learning about approaches to bat conservation and monitoring in other countries. The workshop has stimulated them to work on a collaborative regional project to increase awareness of bats and to survey caves in the Caucasian Eco-region.

The following outputs of the workshop should be highlighted:

- Workshop participants personally were provided with bat detectors.
- Representatives of four countries of the Caucasus eco-region were trained in the use of bat detectors and monitoring methodologies.
- Participating countries discussed volunteer action for bat monitoring and approved this approach.
- A standard protocol / form for recording hibernating bats was considered and approved.
- A clear way forward including canvassing opinion on a Pan-European monitoring project was identified.
Bat conservation in Slovakia
By Peter Kaňuch

The Slovak Bat Conservation Group (SON) is an NGO focused on the conservation and research of bats and their habitats in Slovakia. It has worked since 1993 and has around 30 professional and amateur bat workers. Members of SON collect data about bat species distribution around the whole country. Their activities mainly focus on the winter and summer roost censuses. More than 300 winter roosts are monitored each year and more than 3,000 buildings have been controlled since 1996. Such data are provided to the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic with which the SON has good long-term co-operation. The most important common projects were NATURA 2000, Definition of Favourable Conservation Status and the Proposal of Monitoring Methodology that is in process at present. The main conservation activities are management and reconstruction of cave and mine entrances and cleaning of roof attics from bat guano. The conflicts between bats and dwellers in prefab houses are going to be a serious problem in this time.

Bats of Poland
By Prof. Bronisław W. Wołoszyn, Poland

1. Introduction
The territory of Poland provides a wide range of habitats for its bat fauna. Poland appears to form an important link between the bat population in north-eastern and western and southern Europe. Some species reach the northern or north-eastern limits of their geographical distribution within the country, thus research of Poland’s bat fauna is of interest from a geographical point of view.

For many years only a small number of biologists were interested in bats. In the 1980ies more scientists and amateurs started working on bats. In 1987 a major initiative was taken with the founding of the Chiropterological Information Center (CIC) Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków. Apart from the CIC there are several local amateurs organisations (amateur groups) in Poland working on bats.

1996 was an exceptionnal year for Polish chiropterology. In this year Poland became Party to EUROBATS. It hasn't changed the legal situation as far as the bat protection is concerned because the animals have been strictly protected in Poland since 1952, but it has constituted the basis for extensive international co-operation. The development of the chiropterological research and active actions undertaken to protect bats were appreciated by the international community. As good examples of such co-operation four international conferences were organised in Kraków: the First International Conference on the Carpathian Bats (1st ICCB, 7-8 Dec 1996), the Second Meeting of the Advisory Committee of EUROBATS (28-29 Jan 1997), both organised by Chiropterological Information Center in co-operation with the Ministry of Nature Protection and the Polish Academy of Sciences, the VIIth European Bat Research Symposium (23 – 27 Aug 1999), and the 13th International Bat Research Conference (Mikołajki, 23-27 August 2004, Poland), organised by the Museum and Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.
2. Bat species

Of the three families of bats known for Europe, two extend into Poland. Bats form a quarter of Poland’s mammalian fauna. The occurrence of 22 species of bats has been confirmed in the Polish territory so far (for complete list see Polish National Reports, available on the EUROBATS website). There are 2 horseshoe bat species, the greater and the lesser horseshoe bats (Rhinolophus ferrumequinum and Rhinolophus hipposideros), along with 20 species of vespertilionid bat. The presence of the midge pipistrelle bat (Pipistrellus pygmaeus) was confirmed (GAS & POSTA 2001, RACHWALD & SKUDLAREK 2001, WOŁOSZYN 2001). The occurrence of Plecotus alpinus on Polish territory needs confirmation.

Of the 22 species, eight (Rhinolophus ferrumequinum, Rh. hipposideros, Myotis bechsteinii, M. emarginatus, M. dasycneme, Vespertilio murinus, Eptesicus nilssonii and Nyctalus leisleri) were listed in the new edition of the Polish Red Data Book of Animals (Vertebrates) (WOŁOSZYN, in: GŁOWACIŃSKI et al. 2001).

3. Protection of Bats

During the last 50 years the number of most bat species has seriously decreased in the Holarctic temperate zone. This phenomenon was mainly caused by the influence of pesticides and changes of environment as the results of man activity and by purposeful and unintentional extermination by man.

3.1. Historical background

Discussions about the conservation of bats started at the end of the 18th century. In Europe, the first legal protection of bats was put into force in Germany. On 21 May 1798 a law was passed in Hesse-Cassel for protection of insect eating birds and bats (HINKEL & MATZ, 1998). In 1868, a draft law which included the conservation of bats was promulgated in Galicia (Poland) but was never put into force. Legal protection of bats was put into force also in the Netherlands in 1880 (LINA, 1986). At present bats are legally protected in most European countries. There are also some international conventions and agreements in which the conservation of bats is included. Governments are also primarily responsible for the implementation of these legislations but their initiatives on bat conservation are still leaving much to desire. At present, most bat conservation actions in Europe are initiated by NGOs.

3.2. Legislation in Poland

In Poland bats have been legally protected since 1952. Now all bat species are under the protection of the Decree of the Minister of the Environment concerning the species protection of animals as signed on 26.09.2001. This implements provisions of the Nature Conservation Act passed on 16.10.1991, with subsequent amendments (main text and texts of amendments are available in the Dziennik Ustaw Official Journal of Laws – see: Dz. U. 1991 No 114 item 492, Dz. U. 2001 No 99 item 1079, Dz. U. 2001 No 100 item 1085, and Dz. U. 2001 No 145 item 1623).

The Decree of the Minister of the Environment concerning the species protection of animals prohibits:

- The intentional killing, injuring, catching, possessing or keeping of live bats, as well as the possession of dead bats or parts thereof;
- The frightening, disturbing, photographing, filming and observing of bats from a distance where this causes disturbance during hibernation, breeding or the birth of offspring, without permission from the Governor of the Province (Voivod);
- The intentional destruction of bat habitats;
- The stuffing of dead bats (whole or parts) and the keeping of stuffed bats or their parts without permission from the Governor of the Province;
- The moving of bats from the places where they occur naturally to other places (as well the release to nature of bats that were born and brought up in the captivity);
- The purchasing, offer for sale, exchange, giving as a present, import or export of bats, either alive or dead, including entire stuffed specimens, their parts or derivatives.

In accordance with the same Decree, the aforementioned prohibitions do not apply to:

- The photographing or filming of bats in buildings and in places accessible to the public;
- The catching of stray bats in housing areas by an authorised person or institution, and their subsequent removal to places of regular occurrence;
- The catching of injured or weak bats in order to give them veterinary help or their delivery to a rehabilitation centre;
- Actions taken within the confines of rational human management, especially that concerning agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

4. Monitoring of bat populations

The earliest quantitative data about the populations of bats in Poland come from the middle of the 19th century. Taczanowski, the eminent zoologist of that time, reported (1854) about a huge summer colony of Large mouse-eared bats in the Bat Cave near Kraków: "Six years ago
count Wodzicki (...) found enormous mass of bats fixed to the ceiling (of the cave). In order to find out how difficult they were to frighten he fired three shots in one direction. (...) As a result three baskets were filled with dead bats". Taczanowski, a prominent polish naturalist of the 19th century, concluded this story appealing to the visitors to the cave for "not killing these innocent animals without an apparent reason". It was perhaps the first vote in Poland on bat protection.

The first reliable, quantitative data concerning the bat populations in Poland come from the 1950s and was published by the prominent Polish chiropterologist Kazimierz Kowalski. Since that time the populations of bats hibernating in caves and cave-like shelters have undergone considerable fluctuation, and as a result of anthropogenic factors their numbers diminished drastically in the next decades. Since the second half of the 1980s, when the use of many harmful substances was stopped, we could observe a slow increase of bat populations.

Since 1988 every year national wide bat censuses have been organised in Poland. "Winter Bat Census" (DSN) is the name which the whole action received. Its organisation undertook the Chiropterological Information Center, operating at the Institute of Animal Systematics and Evolution Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków. At the start of the Winter Bat Census in 1988 this was the first action of this type in Poland and one of a few in the World.

The DSN had at least two goals: The first aim was to assess the condition of the bat populations and if possible study the tendencies in their changes. The second purpose of the action was to gather as accurate data as possible about the places of bat shelters.

Since 1997 the monitoring was organised by the Chiropterological Information Centre PAS and also by regional centres, mainly by non-governmental organisations and Universities.

4.1. Winter shelters identified as important for the conservation of bats

In Poland there are only four known winter shelters where more than a thousand hibernating bats have been observed. There are another 19 localities where the number of wintering bats ranges from 201 to 1,000 individuals, 33 where numbers of bats range from 101 to 200 and 63 with numbers between 50 and 100 hibernating animals (see Polish National Report 2001, available on the EUROBATS website). There are also some other winter shelters with smaller numbers of animals, but identified as important to the conservation of bats in Poland – for instance on account of the presence of rare species.

The identification and proper protection of winter bat shelters needs greater efforts at national level. Some new projects in this field have already been initiated in Poland (mostly by local groups), but they need some legislative and financial support.

The most important bat hibernacula plus some bat summer roosts were proposed as object for protection within the Polish part of the NATURA 2000 network.

4.2. Areas of particular importance to the maintenance of the current state of bat populations in Poland

The "Nietoperek" and "Nietoperek II" bat reserves are underground fortifications of the Międzyrzecz Fortified Front (MFF), which form the largest bat hibernaculum in Poland. The maximal number of hibernating bats, 29,493 individuals, was observed in February 1991 (Urbaničzyk, in Wołoszyn 1994). 12 bat species (Myotis bechsteinii, M. brandii, M. dasycneme, M. daubentonii, M. myotis, M. mystacinus, M. nattereri, Pipistrellus pipistrellus, Eptesicus serotinus, Barbastella barbastellus, Plecotus auritus and P. austricus) have been found hibernating there, and a further one, the northern bat (Eptesicus nilssonii), has been observed in the area of MFF, but not yet in the main underground system. In 1980, approximately one-third of the surface area of corridors was embraced by protection as the "Nietoperek" Bat Reserve. On account of increased tourist traffic in this area in the early 1990s as well as of the small area covered by the Reserve, the protection afforded to bats began to look insufficient. Thus in September 1997 an area of 5,117.72 ha surrounding the underground fortifications became constituted as a "Natural-Landscape Complex" to protect the bats’ maternity colonies, feeding grounds and migratory routes. In October 1998, the National Foundation for Environmental Protection from Warsaw started to work on the preparation of a "Nietoperek Management Plan". As a consequence, in December of the same year the remaining 67% of the underground corridors were embraced by protection as the "Nietoperek II" Bat Reserve. The Plan was finally accepted into local law in June 2000, and will remain in force until 2019. In line with the Plan, the local nature conservancy authorities are obliged to undertake several protection activities, e.g. to keep the whole system gated in winter, to increase the number of microhabitats available for hibernating bats and, in cooperation with local forestry managers, to commence with changes in forest structure that could be favourable to bats. The Plan also provides that tourist movement is to be forbidden in both bat reserves from 1st November to 31st March, while an increase in the summer months,
except places occupied by summer colonies of bats, is recommended.

The main threats to the winter colony of bats in MFF are the tourist industry, changes in micro-climatic conditions (esp. water level) and the building of the A3 motorway.

Other areas of a particular importance are caves of the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland, the Polish Carpathians, and the Polish Sudety Mountains, as well as variously located old fortifications and summer roosts in churches and the attics of private houses.

5. Chiropterological Information Center (CIC)
As mentioned above the Chiropterological Information Center (CIC) was established in May 1987 and is now located as a department in the Institute of Animal Systematics and Evolution Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków. The main goal of the CIC is to put on line all information on bats in Poland, to promote systematic and biogeographical study on bats, to consult and co-operate with the government and to be the scientific institution on protection of bats in Poland. The CIC organised ten winter bat censuss (DSN) in Poland. One important area of CIC activity is the yearly organisation of a chiropterological school for the government agencies’ personnel and non-government organisations involved in environmental protection as well as for amateur chiropterologists in order to distribute practical knowledge about bats and the ways of their protection. During the past 15 years over 400 naturalists, students and bat watchers have participated in these courses.

6. Non-Governmental Organisations involved in bat conservation
The more important Polish non-governmental organisations (NGOs) concerned with the monitoring and conservation of bats and with the education in regard to this group of animals are the following:

- *Centrum Dziedzictwa Przyrody Górnego Śląska [The Center for the Natural Heritage of Upper Silesia] (Katowice)
- *Fundacja Ekologiczna Ziem Legnickiej "Zielona Akcja" [Ecological Foundation "Green Action"] (Legnica)
- *Mazowieckie Towarzystwo Ochrony Fauny (MTOF) [Mazovian Society for the Protection of Fauna] (Siedlce)
- *Ogólnopolskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Nietoperzy (OTON) [The Polish Society for Bat Protection] (Warsaw)
- *Polskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Przyrody "pro Natura" (PTOP "pro Natura") [The Polish Society of Wildlife Friends "pro Natura"] (Wrocław)
- *Sekcja Chiropterologiczna Towarzystwa Przyrodników [The Chiropterological Section of the Naturalists Society] (Kraków)
- *Stowarzyszenie dla Natury "Wilk" [The Association for Nature "WOLF"] (Godziszka)
- *Wrocławska Grupa Chiropterologiczna [Wrocław Chiropterological Group] (Wrocław)

The asterisk * means organisation belonging to Poro-zumienie dla Ochrony Nietoperzy (PON) - The Agreement for Bat Conservation - the union of organisations and institutions which commenced with its activity in the years 2000-2004.

7. Examples of projects carried out recently

- "ABC - project" - Atlas of Bats of the Carpathians.
- Activity of bats at the entrance of underground shelters out of the winter season.
- Bats migrations to the "Nietoperek" Bat Reserve.
- Habitat use, distribution and diversity of bats in northern Poland.
- Monitoring of populations number and long term population trends of M. daubentonii, M. myotis, M. nattereri, Barbastella barbastellus, Plecotus auritus in "Nietoperek" bat reserve.
- Monitoring of bat population sizes and long-term population trends on the Śnieżnik Massif (Sudety Mountains).
- Natural and anthropogenic factors affecting bat mortality.
- Social vocalisation in Nathusius’ pipistrelle (Pipistrellus nathusii)
- Summer activity of bats in the area surrounding the "Nietoperek" bat reserve.
- The bacterial flora of the alimentary tract of vespertilionid bats.
8. Publications

Three journals exclusively devoted to bat biology are published in Poland.


Apart of three journals mentioned above several publications in other scientific and popular journals and also in book form were published.

9. List of activities pursued to promote awareness of the importance of bat conservation.

- International Bat Nights (since 1995)
- Bat Education Centre in Poznań
- Bat Hospital in Poznań
- Bat Observatory "Batmanówka"
- Education in the mass-media
- Education of foresters
- Exhibition "Face to face with bats"
- Monographic lectures "Natural History of Bats"
- Polish National Bat Conference (Every year since 1988)

10. Bibliography

For extensive publication lists see the Polish National Reports on the EUROBATS website.

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The largest project on bat protection in Lithuania

By Marija Jankauskiene, Project manager, Lithuania
Translated from Lithuanian by Prof. Dr. Dainius H. Pauza, Lithuania

The project “Arrangement of the former soviet military base in Plokstine forest for bat protection and cognitive tourism” is afloat. It is under implementation of the “Liepija” ecologic club in co-operation with Zemaitijos National Park, on the territory of which a former soviet military base is placed. Zemaitijos National Park is located in the north-western part of Lithuania (Samogitia) and is well known for many Baltic bat workers due to its hospitable sponsorship of the first Baltic bat detector workshop in 2001.

The main project supporter is the United Nations Developmental Programme Global Environment Foundation (GEF). The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania and the Plunge district municipality support this project as well.

In pursuance of this project, a number of the specialised bat boxes (4 types) were made and installed in 2004 in a strict Plokstine Nature Reserve that is famous for its colonies of two bat species: the Brown long-eared bat and Nathusius’ pipistrelle. Noteworthy, some new bat boxes were occupied by the Nathusius’ pipistrelles already in the same year’s autumnal bat migration season.

The “Lutute Press” issued the hardback “Siksnosparniai (Bats)” with almost one hundred color photographs of
Bat conservation in Germany is a business of many volunteer experts, regional nature conservation administration and the Federal Government. While the latter is responsible for international treaties like the EUROBATS Agreement and the EU Habitats Directive the implementation of conservation measures is mainly a duty of the governments of the 16 German States. NGOs and private persons support them in many ways and in some regions bat conservation is completely based on volunteers’ knowledge and enthusiasm.

EUROBATS encouraged the German Federal Ministry of the Environment to give funds for research on bat ecology and the improvement of conservation measures. Over the years projects on bats in forests, bats in towns and villages, bat monitoring, ringing and population genetics were carried out. Co-operation with certain States or NGOs took place in many cases. Some of the projects have encouraged volunteer activities or promoted the education of bat experts as a side effect. The project results not only improved the knowledge on bat biology for the purpose of bat hibernation formed the most important part of the project. Already in spring 2004, the basements were cleaned, sealed up, re-ventilated, and new proper doors were installed. Special bat boxes or racks for hibernating bats were integrated into the arranged basements. Surroundings of the basements were also adjusted: a guide (information) house and a car-park were prepared for visitors of the Plokstine Military Museum and Center for Ecological Education. Inside the guide house and in front of the car park, two large colorful information sheets about bats and bat protection were set up and a new pedestrian path aimed to inform tourists about bats and their protection problems was installed. Interviews of visitors demonstrate that the project has an extraordinary success and, therefore it is possible that the project “Arrangement of the former soviet military base in Plokstine forest for bat protection

Germany: Ten years of mutual efforts in bat conservation

By Dr. Peter Boye, Germany

Bat conservation in Germany is a business of many volunteer experts, regional nature conservation administration and the Federal Government. While the latter is responsible for international treaties like the EUROBATS Agreement and the EU Habitats Directive the implementation of conservation measures is mainly a duty of the governments of the 16 German States. NGOs and private persons support them in many ways and in some regions bat conservation is completely based on volunteers’ knowledge and enthusiasm.
Bat migration in Europe and Migration Atlas Project

In the context of the geographical scope of the Agreement, the MoP4 decided that the Advisory Committee should make recommendations on future work required to assess the timing and distribution patterns of bat migration. This should lead to recommendations on the conservation of migratory bat species in due course.

A main information basis for that will be provided through the outcomes of the German Migration Atlas Project, which is being carried out by the Museum Alexander Koenig in Bonn: Two publications are planned, one in German containing the national results and one in English covering the whole of Europe.

The European Atlas will be printed in 2005 and will contain maps at an European level as well as at a regional level for some species. A chapter on ringing techniques is envisaged, reflecting the EUROBATS Guidelines on the subject, and a chapter on ringing programmes in different countries. Furthermore, there will be a chapter on results covering all species and containing notes about the conservation implications for long distance migratory bats. An Annex will offer a list of addresses of ringing centres and a short overview of the conservation status of bats by country. AC9 recommended that all data collected in EUROBATS Range States concerning bat migration should be passed on to the group in charge of the Atlas project.

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and conservation, but they also initiated new activities in some of the States and NGOs. Sometimes such initiatives created more follow-up action, which again gives additional support to EUROBATS.

A good example of such a mutual process is the improvement of the protection of bats in houses. The problems coming up with bat roosts in houses are well known since the beginning of bat conservation. For this reason it is one of the main targets of EUROBATS to improve bat protection in towns and villages. The German Federal Ministry of the Environment funded a five-years project to develop appropriate measures for roost site protection and creation in buildings and to implement a public relations campaign on bat conservation. The results and the experiences of this project were of great benefit to similar programmes established in the States of Thuringia, Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein. Volunteer experts could also take advantages either by innovating their own strategies or by getting support by a State for urgent conservation measures in a certain building. Through the EUROBATS reporting procedures and technical publications the Federal Government gets useful information about all activities in the regions. The many new data on the distribution and roost site selection of bat species as well as conservation problems in settlements are very valuable for other subjects of EUROBATS’ work, e.g. the development of appropriate monitoring methodologies or bat conservation guidelines for architects and craftsmen.

Bat conservation actions by the Federal and the States’ governments focused the attention of other policy sectors and the public on bats. As a consequence, bats now play an important role in many environmental impact assessments and nature conservation programmes in Germany. This is connected to improved methods for surveying bats and finding roosts, developed by professional consultants or volunteer experts. Furthermore, transboundary cooperation in bat conservation became important not only for the Federal Ministry of the Environment but also for the German States and NGOs.

Looking back on the past ten years, one has to say that EUROBATS created much bat conservation action in Germany, which had mutual effects and improved national and international bat conservation significantly. EUROBATS therefore is a very successful Agreement. The projects conducted by the Federal Government of Germany played an important role in the process.
The rareness of a good number of bat species as well as the threats to their habitats are the main reasons for the conservation measures taken by the Walloon Region since 1993: measures in favour of and protection of potential winter roosts (natural or artificial underground cavities), reproduction roosts (buildings and churches), conservation and restoration of the foraging habitats. These various measures have been accompanied by an adapted legislative framework.

Protected winter roosts

Objective:
To create a sufficient number of protected winter roosts, which are distributed in such a way that bats can always reach one of them in less than 20 to 25 km. This is the average distance reasonably covered by the Walloon species.

The situation of winter roosts will require a well-structured network.

Legal means:
In 1995 a conservatory convention was established between landowners and the Ministry of the Walloon Region, which legally ensured the organisation of the protection of underground cavities of scientific interest.

Results:
Many sites being property of the Walloon Region or covered by the conservatory convention mentioned above have an official status as "Underground Cavity of Scientific Interest" and "State Natural Reserve".

Currently, the Walloon Region counts 69 Underground Cavities of Scientific Interest with state agreement and 67 underground sites managed in State Natural Reserves.

These hibernating places are made up of:
- 64 % of natural caves: e.g. rock caves, cracks;
- 36 % of artificial underground systems: e.g. mines, underground quarries, railroad or canal tunnels, military fortresses.

The majority of these protected underground sites are integrated into the Network "Natura 2000".

Adjustments and the closing down of sites are fully paid by the Ministry of the Walloon Region.

Scientific follow-up:
A continuing survey makes it possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the means to protect the cavity as well as the trends of hibernating populations. The Ministry of the Walloon Region constitutes a "bio-geographical" databank, which intends to gather all information on the territory including bats. This information contributes to the "Monitoring of the State of the Walloon Environment by biological indicators".

Protected reproduction roosts - Operation "Lofts and steeples"

Objective:
To restore access or to make lofts and steeples of public buildings (churches, schools, city halls e.g.) accessible to wild fauna in order to form a network of reproduction roosts, which is as dense as possible, on the whole Walloon territory.

This operation was initiated within the framework of the European Year of Nature Conservation in 1995.

Legal means:
Thanks to subsidies of the Ministry of the Walloon Region these sites have been converted into natural reserves. They are protected, physically by a closing down, and administratively by a convention signed by the commune (owner of the building) and the Region.

Results:
114 of the 262 communes of the Walloon Region have signed the convention so far. They constitute a totality of 955 potential summer resting places, distributed all over the territory of the Walloon Region in a dense-meshed network. Two thirds are arranged right now.

The principal measures for bats set up within this framework include i.a.:
- 160 bat's access on attic window;
- 83 bat’s access on snuffbox;
- 160 bat’s access on roof;
- 820 bat’s access on louvers;
- 120 nesting boxes.

Scientific follow-up:
Attending bat populations in summer roasts is very delicate. The method of observation requires one visit per
year outside the period of presence of individuals. It is a matter of quantifying droppings on normalised witness-zones and to follow their evolution year after year: traces n° 0 = no traces; n° 1 = of 1 to 10 droppings, n° 2 = of 11 to 100, n° 3 = of 101 to 500, n° 4 = more of 500, n° 5 = several thousands, generally in thick heaps ( signs + or - can be used to increase precision as relating to half of the number corresponding).

This method is particularly well adapted for the sampling of several hundreds of roosts spread over the different natural zones of Wallonia.

Foraging habitats and ecological network

The maintenance and the restoration of corridors between biologically rich zones in invertebrate populations are essential for the conservation of bats. It is thus important to preserve a true ecological network made up of hedges, ponds, wet meadows, forest edges, alignment of trees etc. In this regard, the Ministry of the Walloon Region initiated several actions such as the operation "Edges of Road", fallows, subsidisation for plantation and maintenance of hedges.

Other measures aiming to reduce the use of pesticides, which furthermore leave lesser remnants, are equally very favourable to the prey of the bats.

An agreement is anticipated between the Division of Nature and Forests and the Ministry of National Defence for integrated management of military territories in open and wooded environments (approximately 6,000 ha).

However, the communal authorities also have the possibility to take legal measures in favour of nature conservation, such as for instance prohibiting the clearing of the hedges on their territory.

Conclusion and prospects

The policy of the Walloon Region takes into account all aspects of the biological cycle of these species. Thus the long-term objective is to support the establishment or the maintenance of bats in these protected and diversified places in order to constitute a network on a regional scale. Right now, the conjunction of the networks of winter and reproduction roosts seems favourable to populations in place. Indeed, the first results showing a positive evolution of the populations could result from these conservation measures.
In April 2001 Joan Childs, Investigations Officer for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), was seconded to the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) as Bat Investigations Officer for two days a week for two years. The aim of the project was:

- to record bat offences and determine the extent and type;
- to determine if the current legislation is being adequately enforced and if it is working to protect bats;
- to assist the police in their role of investigating bat crime by providing training, advice, practical assistance and resources;
- to make recommendations on how to enhance the protection of bats and their roosts using the legislation as a tool.

A total of 144 bat offences were recorded in the two years of the project. Analysis revealed the following breakdown of the offences:

- Building and development work 67%
- Tree surgery and felling 9%
- Deliberate exclusion 9%
- Disturbance 6%

The remaining 9% was divided between the following:

- Use of electronic repellers on bats;
- Misuse of bat licences;
- Vandalism;
- Cavity wall insulation;
- Quarry work;
- Wasp nest treatment;
- Sale of dead bat.

This number of bat offences alone is likely to have an effect on bat conservation. However it is clear that the number of reported incidents represented the tip of the iceberg as many offences would take place on private property and remain undetected and unrecorded.

As more than two-thirds of bat crime was committed by the building and development industry, it is clear there should be a targeted education programme in order to persuade them to comply with the bat legislation. Monitoring of bat offences must continue in the future to ensure that resources aimed at preventing bat crime can be targeted in the most efficient way, and to ensure that education programmes are successful.

The bat offences break down as follows:

- Damage or destruction of a roost 80%
- Disturbance of bats at the roost 10%
- Exclusion or obstruction of a roost 7%
- Disturbance of bats away from the roost 1%
- Possession of bat 1%
- Sale of dead bat 1%

It was particularly worrying that 97% of the bat crime took place at the roost, which involves whole colonies rather than individual bats, and which must increase the negative effect on bat conservation.

In the UK it falls on the police to enforce the bat legislation and there is a network of police Wildlife Liaison Officers (WLOs) to deal with wildlife crime. There are few full-time WLOs and most WLOs undertake their wildlife duties in additional to their normal police role. The police should be encouraged to better resource the WLO network.

Training was undertaken to equip WLOs with the expertise necessary to investigate bat crime and they were encouraged to work in partnership with local bat groups, Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations and the BCT. This training must be continued and expanded.

Of the 144 incidents reported, 129 were passed to the police in sufficient time for enforcement action. Of these, 13 were not dealt with due to police inaction and 45 resulted in no police action due to insufficient evidence, however the police carried out enforcement action on 71 incidents.

Of the 71 incidents resulting in enforcement action the police dealt with 24 by way of advice, 33 by way of verbal or written warnings, six by way of official caution, and there were eight prosecutions. Of these prosecutions, six were successful resulting in total fines of £2,600 and costs of £455.

It is encouraging that almost half of the bat offences received police attention. The effect of a police officer attending at the scene of a bat crime should not be underestimated. Prosecutions have a deterrent effect far beyond the confines of the actual case, encouraging compliance with the legislation. As well as the police, it is also vital that Crown Prosecutors and Magistrates are trained to understand the conservation significance of bat offences so that appropriate penalties can be handed out.
Although some the wildlife legislation in England, Wales and Scotland has recently been strengthened, weaknesses in the legislation were identified during the project, and these should be addressed in order to provide consistency across the UK and across different pieces of legislation, and to close potential legal loopholes.

The results of the project have been published more detailed in the report *Bat crime*, which is available from the BCT (either electronically or as a hard copy) from:

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**First Baltic Bat Meeting in Finland**

By Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen, Finland

**Introduction**

The first Baltic Bat Meeting was organised on 24 – 25 October 2003 in Finland on the island of Seili. This beautiful island is located in southwestern Finland, in the archipelago of Turku. The meeting was organised by Mrs. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen / Finnish Museum of Natural History and Mr. Petteri Vihervaara / University of Turku with support of many organisations. The chairs of the meeting were Mr. Mikko Jokinen / City of Turku and Dr. Torsten Stjernberg / Finnish Museum of Natural History. 31 participants from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and Russia attended the meeting. Also representatives of the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, WWF Finland and the EUROBATS Agreement were present.

**The aim of the meeting**

The goal of the meeting was to get bat workers - scientists as well as amateurs and officers in nature conservation - together to discuss the situation of bat research and conservation in different countries around the Baltic Sea. The other important task was to outline possible ways of co-operation in the field of bat research. The goals of the meeting were mostly achieved. Unfortunately there was shortage of time for the final discussion about the future of co-operation in the Baltic area.

**The presentations and discussions**

The presentations of the participants are available for reading on the website of the Finnish Chiropterological Society www.lepakko.org. On this site you can also find the notes of the presentations and discussions.

**Co-operation in the Baltic area**

It was agreed that this kind of a meeting is very useful and should be organised every now and then, e.g. every second year in different countries. It was quite difficult to agree about the scale and approach of co-operational projects. Also possible sources of funding were discussed. This discussion can be read in detail on the above-mentioned website. The meeting decided to start planning a project to study bat migration in the Baltic area. Prof. Ingemar Ahlen (Sweden) and Mr. Lothar Bach (Germany) will prepare a draft project plan which can then be discussed by the participants and others on the same website.
Following a suggestion of young bat researchers from Norway and Finland, an international workshop on modern techniques in bat work within the context of the EUROBATS Agreement was held from 26 to 29 September 2004 in Germany. The purpose of the workshop was to inform about the theory and practice of bat banding in Germany, and about current methods of handling and studying bats in the field. The intention was to enhance bat research in Finland and Norway, and particularly to aid in reorganising bat banding in the two countries.

The host institution for the workshop was the Bat Banding Office at the Zoological Research Institute and Museum Alexander Koenig, Bonn, with participation and support from the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, the Consultant Office for Landscape Ecology Simon & Widdig, Marburg, and the EUROBATS Secretariat. Dr. Peter Boye, Tine Meyer-Cords, Dr. Rainer Hutterer, Sandra Königsmark and Andreas Streit formed the local committee in Bonn, while Matthias Simon and his office colleagues organised the fieldwork in Marburg.

The participants from Norway, Martin Fleissner, Kjell Isaksen, Jeroen van der Kooij, Trude Starholm and Roar Solheim, are associated with the Norwegian Zoological Society. The participants from Finland, Nina Hagner-Wahlsten, Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen and Thomas Lilley, are associated with the Finnish Chiropterological Society and some with the Finnish Museum of Natural History and the University of Turku.

The first day of the workshop was devoted to various aspects of bat banding and the study of museum specimens. In the evening the group went across the Rhine into the forest of the Seven Mountains. Mistnets were set for swarming bats at several entrances of the Ofenkaulen quarry, a nationally important hibernaculum. Greater mouse-eared bats, Bechstein’s bats, Natterer’s bats, Daubenton’s bats, Whiskered bats and Brown long-eared bats were netted, handled and ringed. All participants enjoyed a wonderful night with owls, dormice and plenty of bats.

The second day the group went to Marburg, where Matthias Simon and his colleagues demonstrated the use of telemetry equipment in the field and netted Greater mouse-eared bats, Bechstein’s bats, Natterer’s bats, Daubenton’s bats and Brown long-eared bats at three different hibernacula.

After a short sleep the participants visited the EUROBATS Secretariat and then went into the field near Bonn again. The floodplains of the Sieg River were the destination of the third excursion. Nathusius’ pipistrelles and Noctules could be heard and seen in bat boxes or at tree holes, and Serotines were seen and heard while they were hunting. A long farewell-dinner concluded an interesting and enjoyable workshop. The Finnish and Norwegian colleagues saw other bat species than in their home countries, and all participants benefited from the free exchange of knowledge and experience and from the nice atmosphere during the workshop. We hope that this was the first workshop on bat research and conservation organised by the Bat Banding Office Bonn in a series to come.
**Some short information**

**EUROBATS staff news**

As the Parties agreed on the establishment of a new part-time post of a Secretary we are most happy to welcome Ayhan Polat to the Secretariat who already successfully contributed to the organisation of the 9th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in Vilnius as well as to the European Workshop on Bat Rabies in May 2004. Ayhan has graduated in contemporary history, political and Islamic sciences.

Our Administrative Assistant Christine Boye is very happy about the birth of her little daughter Hannah Maria in January 2004. After her maternity leave she returned to the Secretariat in July 2004 on a part-time basis.

For the time of her absence and later to fill the vacant 50% of the Administrative Assistant’s post, we are most happy to have Catherine Lehmann onboard. Catherine is a graduated lawyer specialised in international law as well as European environmental law. She already proved to be a great benefit for the daily workload of the EUROBATS Secretariat and during the 9th Advisory Committee Meeting.

From April to August 2004 Dessislava Krüger joined the EUROBATS Secretariat as an intern. Dessi graduated in ecology with specialisation in palaeoecology. During her time with EUROBATS, she was to a high extend involved in the preparations and the performance of the Bat Rabies Workshop and the 9th Advisory Committee Meeting. Furthermore, she translated the “Guidelines for the Conservation and Management of Underground Habitats for Bats” into Bulgarian. She also contributed essentially to the newly published EUROBATS leaflet. She left for the Netherlands to participate in a one-year Master’s programme in Environmental and Resource Management in Amsterdam. We are very happy having met her, we enjoyed very much working with her and we wish her all the best for the future.

In September 2004 Marco Montesines was contracted by the EUROBATS Secretariat in order to improve the EUROBATS website. We would like to thank him for his excellent work and we wish him all the best for his future.

**Membership to the Agreement**

In 2003 Belgium, Latvia and Slovenia acceded to the Agreement; Estonia joined the family in 2004. The membership to EUROBATS has now grown to 30 Parties.

Please find a complete list of our Parties and Range States on the EUROBATS website.
Farewell Ulf, welcome Rob and Lahcen!

At the end of July 2004, Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht retired from the post of Executive Secretary of the UNEP/CMS Secretariat after 12 years of highly dedicated work for the Convention and species conservation. He has accompanied the evolution of EUROBATS nearly from the beginning and we would like to express our gratitude for his continuous support and inspiration over all these years. Good luck for the future, Ulf!

The new Executive Secretary, Robert Hepworth, is indeed one of the fathers of EUROBATS and we are very happy to welcome him. After having been a senior officer in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), UK, for many years, he has last served in the UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi as Deputy Director of the Division on Environmental Conventions. We are very much looking forward to working closely with him. EUROBATS will certainly benefit from his tremendous experience in international environmental affairs.

However, Rob did not arrive alone. Molay Lahcen El Kabiri joined him as new Deputy Executive Secretary of UNEP/CMS. Lahcen has worked for many years very successfully for nature and species conservation in Morocco and will now contribute with his excellent expertise to the work of the Convention as well as the related Agreements.

Welcome Rob and Lahcen!

The EUROBATS Secretariat has published a new leaflet. It tries to give a comprehensive overview about the Agreement’s work and bats in general. It is available free of charge in English and German.

We were very honoured that on 5 November 2004 the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Prof. Dr. Klaus Töpfer, has launched the leaflet to the public.

As every year, the European Bat Night will take place on the last weekend in August. In 2005, this will be on 27/28 August.

If you would like to receive Bat Night posters in order to announce your events, please contact the Secretariat. They are available free of charge in A2 and A3 format.

A new illustrated book on bats has been published recently. It contains beautiful pictures of bats by the German photographer Bernd Stein and interesting bilingual texts (German / English).

“Amazing bats - Authentic pictures of fascinating creatures.” [German title: “Faszination Fledermaus - Von einem, der auszog, Fledermäuse zu fotografieren.”]

New EUROBATS leaflet available

European Bat Night 2005

New illustrated book “Amazing bats”
Hubert Roer (1926—2002), pioneer of bat conservation
By Dr. Rainer Hutterer, Germany

Dr. Hubert Roer, long standing editor of the bat journal MYOTIS, died on 17 November 2002 at the age of 76. He was born on 19 November 1926 and grew up in Heessen, Westphalia. In 1952 he received his diploma in garden sciences at the Technical University of Munich. In the same year he moved to Bonn to begin a Ph.D. project in agricultural entomology at the University of Bonn. He was offered a working place at Museum Koenig by the director Martin Eisentraut. In this institute he finished his dissertation on problems of insect migrations in 1956. He then joined the staff of Museum Koenig on a grant supplied by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and continued to study migrations of butterflies, using thin alloy bands attached to their wings.

In 1959, Martin Eisentraut decided to establish a Bat Banding Office at Museum Koenig in Bonn. He entrusted Huber Roer with the routine office work. This was again supported by the DFG from 1960 to 1963. In 1963 Roer was appointed to the position of the curator in charge of the beetle collection, but remained responsible for the Bat Banding Office. He soon developed an interest in bat research and issued a newsletter for bat researchers which later became the journal MYOTIS. He edited the journal until 1997, six years after his official retirement.

In 1960, 1971 and 1985 Roer published reviews of the current knowledge of bat migrations in Europe, which received wide attention and which still are a useful source of information. These reviews stimulated other bat researchers, and they also provided data and arguments that contributed to the establishment of the EUROBATS Agreement in 1991. Roer’s approach was always conservation-orientated, and he spent much of his time, often in company of his wife Ursula, in the field or with house owners in order to protect bat colonies. His efforts to study and protect the last colonies of the Greater horseshoe bat in Luxembourg were officially acknowledged and honoured. Even at his home he kept an artificial bat roost where he could release noctules after rehabilitation. It is also one of his merits that over the years Museum Koenig developed into a widely known information center for bat queries, a service that is still being offered to the public. Whoever met Hubert Roer personally will remember him as a great character among the bat researchers in Germany and Europe.

If you prefer to have a look at the Eurobat Chat or download it from our homepage instead of receiving a printed copy, please send us a short note and tell us your E-mail address. Then you would always get a message via E-mail (instead of receiving a printed copy) as soon as our latest issue would be available on our website - so you wouldn’t miss any new issues!

Are you working on themes related to bats? Would you like to tell us about your projects? Do you organise special events dedicated to public awareness on bats?
Then please do not hesitate to send us short reports on your projects. Contributions (in English) on your activities in bat conservation are always welcome!