NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF POPULATION OF EUROPEAN BATS (EUROBATS)

THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

A. General information

Name of the Party:	Kingdom of the Netherlands
Date of entry:	17 March 1992
Date of report:	September 2003
Period covered:	2000-2002
Competent Authority:	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Department of Nature Management, Division of International Affairs, Mr Jan-Willem Sneep, PO Box 20401, 2500 EK The Hague The Netherlands, Tel. +31 (0)70 3785255, Fax: +31 (0)70 3786146 E-mail: j.w.sneep@minlnv.nl
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As from 15 August 1999, Mr P.H.C. Lina is acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee and was member of several of the Committee's intersessional working groups.

B. Status of bats within the territory of the Party

1. Summary details of resident species

In the Netherlands, 21 bat species have been recorded. Two single specimens of *Eptesicus nilssonii* were recorded from oil rigs in the North Sea. *Nyctalus lasiopterus* was observed in one case. Both species are regarded as being non-native. The remaining 19 species are recognized as native, although two of them, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, are regarded as extinct. *Barbastella barbastellus* has not been recorded since several years, and *Myotis bechsteinii,* is rare. However, it has to be taken into account that the latter 4 species have their northern range limits in the southernmost part of the Netherlands. Breeding colonies are not recorded for *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum, Myotis brandtii, Myotis bechsteinii,* and *Barbastella barbastellus*. Of both *Vespertilio murinus* and *Myotis emarginatus* two maternity colonies have been found. *Pipistrellus nathusii* is regarded as a common species. From the second half of May to the first half of August, the majority of its population consists of males; in contrast with autumn, winter and spring, when females are also common. *Myotis daubentonii, Pipistrellus pipistrellus,* and *Eptesicus serotinus* are also common species. See below for population estimates of all native species.

2. Status and trends

Population estimates and Red List categories

Species	Population estimates	Category
Rhinolophus ferrumequinum	-	extinct
Rhinolophus hipposideros	-	extinct
Myotis mystacinus	2,500-4,000	not threatened
Myotis brandtii	275-350	susceptible
Myotis nattereri	1,500-3,000	vulnerable
Myotis emarginatus	300-500	endangered
Myotis daubentonii	15,000 - 30,000	not threatened
Myotis dasycneme	8,000 - 10,000	not threatened
Myotis myotis	10 - 15	endangered
Myotis bechsteinii	?	susceptible
Pipistrellus pipistrellus	300,000 - 600,000	not threatened
Pipistrellus nathusii	50,000 - 100,000	not threatened
Eptesicus serotinus	30,000 - 50,000	not threatened
Nyctalus noctula	6,000 - 8,000	not threatened
Nyctalus leisleri	100 - 500	not threatened
Vespertilio murinus	50 - 250	not threatened
Barbastella barbastellus	?	susceptible
Plecotus auritus	4,000 - 6,000	not endangered
Plecotus austriacus	25 - 100	susceptible

Trends in species with a current status of extinct, rare, or endangered

The distribution of both Rhinolophoid species was restricted to Southern Limburg.

Rhinolophus ferrumequinum: No records since March 1998.

Rhinolophus hipposideros: No records since 1983.

The winter population of *Myotis emarginatus* in the limestone area of Southern Limburg is still slightly increasing. The maternity colony, discovered in the late 1980s in a cavity under the roof of a monastery near the town of Echt (province of Limburg), is still present. In 2000, a second maternity colony was discovered in another monastery, just a few kilometres from the other one. This colony counted in 2000 about 40 specimens.

The current winter population of *Myotis myotis* is very small but more or less stable. No maternity colonies are known.

Myotis bechsteinii is a rare species but might be more common as the records show.

Barbastella barbastellus: No records since 1995.

Vespertilio murinus has been recorded over 35 times as single specimens since 1977. As reported before, in 1998, the first maternity colony of this species was recorded from a cavity wall of a single-family house in a town in the province of Utrecht. In 2002, a new maternity colony of about 25 specimens was found in a family house in a village in the province of Groningen

3. Habitats and roost sites

Hollow trees are the only available natural roosts for bats in the Netherlands. Apart from these roosts, there are many types of man-made constructions available that can also be used by bats either in summer or winter, e.g. subterranean limestone quarries, old fortresses, ice-houses, bunkers, cellars, spaces under roofs, and cavity walls of buildings. Bat boxes are being applied in several localities. A diversity of landscapes can provide suitable feeding habitats for bats.

4. Threats

The threats to bat populations are due to loss of suitable habitats from the reconstruction of roof cavities and insulation of cavity walls of buildings, the felling of hollow trees, the deterioration and fragmentation of the landscape, the improved management in agriculture and forestry, the loss of linear vertical landscape elements and feeding grounds, the use of pesticides, and pollution.

5. Data collection

Data are still collected by a few national and regional natural history bodies and are entered into compatible databases. Data are mainly used to determine species distribution and population changes (monitoring).

C. Measures taken to implement Article III of the Agreement

6. Legal measures taken to prevent the deliberate capture, keeping or killing of bats, including details of enforcement actions used to support such measures

Until April 1st, 2002, all bat species were strictly protected by the Nature Conservation Act. As from April 1st 2002, all bat species became fully protected by the new Flora and Fauna Act. The competent authority for this Act is the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
In addition to being a Party to the Bats Agreement, the Netherlands is also a Party to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Council of Europe, Bern Convention). All bat species, apart from *Pipistellus pipistrellus*, are listed in Appendix II to this Convention. *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* is listed in Appendix III to the Convention. However, in the Netherlands, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* has the same conservation status as the Appendix II species.

The Netherlands is also bound by the provisions of Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive). Seven native or formerly native species, (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum), (Rhinolophus hipposideros), Barbastella barbastellus, Myotis bechsteinii, Myotis dasycneme, Myotis emarginatus* and *Myotis myotis*, are listed in Annex II to this Directive, and their conservation requires the designation of special areas of conservation. In the Netherlands, however, such areas are not yet specially designated for bats but several of these areas are covered by designations in accordance with the provisions of the Directive 79/409/EEG of 2 April 1979 (Bird Directive). All native bat species are included in Annex IV to the Directive, indicating the need for strict protection of these species.

7. Sites identified and protected which are important to the conservation of bats

Several areas and two monasteries have been nominated as special areas of conservation in accordance to the provisions of the Habitats Directive to contribute to the conservation of *Myotis dasycneme, M. emarginatus* and *M. myotis.*

8. Consideration given to habitats which are important to bats

As reported previously, the Dutch government adopted the Nature Policy Plan in June 1990. The main objectives of this plan are the sustainable conservation, rehabilitation and development of nature and landscape in the Netherlands, also in the field of international species conservation.
The Nature Policy Plan contains a long-term strategy. The plan sets out the objectives and outlines the government's nature and landscape policy and priorities for a period of approximately thirty years.

Since 1990, many projects and actions have been implemented. The realisation of the National Ecological Network (NEN) has also begun. The NEN is a coherent network of areas, forming a sustainable basis for the ecosystems and species considered to be important in the (inter)national context. The network consists of core areas, nature development areas and ecological corridors. The sustainable development is supported by a buffer policy aimed at removing or minimising negative external influences on the core areas. Conservation measures for bat species will be taken partly in the form of habitat conservation, particularly through the realisation of the NEN.

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

- Following the Landscape Management Foundation of Limburg, the Landscape Management Foundation of Groningen has also set up a network of volunteers and of local government officials involved in pest control to act as consultants in cases of bat colonies in houses and other buildings. A training programme has been developed for the consultants.

- In 2002 the National Pest Control Reference Centre has started a 3-days bat conservation and management training for pest control officers, land managers, nature conservationists and others who can meet problems with bats in buildings or are involved in the management of other types of bat dwellings. This training programme is a contribution to the implementation of the provisions of article III, paragraph 5, of the Bats Agreement.

- Several national and regional activities were held to increase the public awareness of the conservation of bats.

10. Responsible body, in accordance with article III.5 of the Agreement, nominated for the provision of advice on bat conservation and management

The establishment of responsible body in accordance with article III.5 of the Agreement is in preparation. For the time being, advice on bat conservation and management is provided by individual bat experts on request.

11. Additional actions undertaken to safeguard populations of bats

Several bat roosts were restored or newly constructed.

12. Recent and ongoing programmes (including research) relating to the conservation and management of bats

- The monitoring project on bat rabies, started in 1986, was continued.
- The previously reported long-term study on the ecology of *Pipistrellus nathusii* in the Netherlands and on its seasonal migration between the Netherlands and Central and Eastern European countries was continued.
- In 2002, a radio-tracking, transponder, and ringing project on the Pond bat, *Myotis dasycneme,* was started in the province of Zuid-Holland to determine the use of landscape of this species and to find additional maternity colonies. A smaller radio-tracking project on this species was carried out in the province of Gelderland.
- Several environmental impact assessment reports focused on bats and management approvals for the conservation of bats were issued.

13. Consideration being given to potential effects of pesticides on bats, and efforts to replace timber treatment chemicals which are highly toxic to bats

The supply and use of remedial timber treatment (rtt) chemicals is regulated by the Board for the Authorisation of Pesticides. The registration process includes an assessment of exotoxicity to animals, plants and parts of plants whose preservation is desired, or to soil, water or air although bats are not specifically included in such an assessment. The instructions for the use of rtt treatment products do not refer to possible hazard to bats. Neither are recommendations given to the industry to minimise any hazard to bats as a result of rtt. Approved chemicals for rtt are synthetic pyretroids, boron compounds, propiconazole, azaconazole, and alkyldimethyl-benzyl-ammoniumchloride. The use of pentachlorphenol, aldrin, dieldrin, lindane, DDT, tributyl tin compounds, zinc compounds tebuconazole and polyphase iodo-propynyl-butyl-carbamate have been prohibited for rtt. The estimated number of roof cavities treated annually for wood-boring insects or wood-rotting fungi is less than 0.01% of private dwellings and public buildings.

D. Functions of the Agreement

14. Co-operation with other Range States

- The Netherlands' appointed member of the Advisory Committee, Mr. P.H.C. Lina, has been chairman of this Committee since August 1999 and is also acting as chairman of the Co-ordinating Panel for the Conservation of Bats in Europe. This Panel is a regional subgroup of the IUCN/SSC's Chiroptera Specialist Group. The main task of the Panel is to develop and implement collaboration on bat conservation activities in Europe under relevant intergovern-mental treaties, especially the Bats Agreement, and for non-government concerns.

Mr. P.H.C.Lina is also acting as joint vice-president of the Transboundary Association for Bat Protection, which has its seat in Luxembourg.

- Mr. H.J.G.A. Limpens (Ecoconsult & Project Management), was involved with the organisation of several bat detector workshops in Central end Eastern Europe, sponsored by German and United Kingdom governmental bodies.

- Several bat workers from the Netherlands attended the IX European Bat Research Symposium, held on 26-30 August 2001 in Le Havre (France). Mr. P.H.C. Lina has participated in the organising committee of this symposium.

15. Measures taken to implement Resolutions adopted by Meeting of Parties

Resolution 2.2, Consistent Monitoring Methodologies
Bat species dwelling in underground habitats are monitored since a long time and include *Myotis myotis* and *M. bechsteinii.* Monitoring programmes for colonies of *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Eptesicus serotinus* were suspended since these species are changing their summer roosts frequently through reliable data couldn't be obtained. A monitoring programme on *Nyctalus noctula* was also suspended since it was causing a too high pressure of work to the involved volunteer bat workers.

Resolution 2.4, Transboundary Programme: Habitat proposals
The Netherlands has no natural underground habitats for bats but has numerous artificial ones like subterraneous limestone quarries, (semi-) subterraneous bunkers, fortresses, ice houses, cellars etc. which are serving as underground habitats for bats, mainly being winter roosts. Records of bats in all known underground habitats are available in a central database.

Resolution 2.5, Geographical Scope of the Agreement
A long-term study on the ecology and seasonal migration of *Pipistrellus nathusii* is carried out.

Resolutions 2.7 and 3.3, Format of National Report
This report has been prepared in accordance to the adopted format

Resolutions 2.8 and 3.8, On the implementation of the conservation and management plan
Efforts to implement the provisions of article III of the Agreement are presented in this report.

Resolution 3.5, International Year of the Bat
Several national and regional activities were held to increase the public awareness of the conservation of bats.

Resolution 3.7, Amendment to the Agreement
This amendment has not yet been ratified.