

13th Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Cluj, Romania, 23 – 24 August 2008

IWG on 2011 - Year of the bat

Minutes of the preparatory meeting of the IWG

in Budapest (Hungary) on 8 May 2007



Participants:

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Aims and intentions of the Year of the bat

Under the patronage of the “Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals”, the year 2011 will be the “Year of the bat” and at the same time the 20th anniversary of EUROBATS.

The aim and the different intentions of this event have to be clearly defined and they can differ according to the country.

At the moment the protection of bats in buildings in private ownership has not sufficiently been taken into consideration. Therefore, one of the possible aims for the Year of the bat 2011 is to make private persons aware of the need for protection of those species at their private home, to help them to accept the bats in their houses.

Additionally it could be possible to come to an understanding about bats in subterranean habitats.

Means and ideas

It would be helpful to record all the measures taken as far as communication is concerned: This includes recording of the different means of communication which are already available, compilation and analysis of the measures actually taken in the past years in every country, taking stock of the scale of these measures and of the event "European Bat Night" (number of articles in the press, of reports on television, of events in every country, number of participants of the event...). This would allow getting to know those who already have the appropriate experience in the field of communication about bats to make it easier to mobilize resources.

Taking into account the important work realized by the Bat Conservation Trust (communication with regard to children, participation of children in the protection and monitoring work, development of brochures...), it would be helpful to integrate someone from this association as a member of the team for the "Year of the bat".

The associations risk being strongly preoccupied with the communication measures which aim at the general public. Therefore it is appropriate to pay attention to sufficient support measures for those associations.

Although the "Year of the bat" does not take place until 2011, it is necessary to officially inform the countries taking part in this event as soon as possible so that the governments can consider this when planning the budget, a planning which is realized long time in advance.

The following messages have to be passed on to the general public: "Bats are cute and harmless", "Welcome under my roof", "Bats are agreeable housemates", "I'm pleased to have a bat under my roof"...

Different ideas resulting from this first meeting:

Museums of natural history (educational project), as well as zoos and amusement parks where bats are presented to the public could play a useful part in this event (even if the species involved are not indigenous)

However, they have to be informed rapidly. The Museum of Natural History in Bourges (France) could be asked for support because it has already realized many projects which could be used: a list of films and comics which deal with bats has

been written (see Laurent Arthur) as well as a learning kit for schools which is passed around every year.

For this occasion, the German variety show for children ("Mara and the bats") could be taken up again (see Christine Harbusch).

Opera Houses could be invited to play "the bat" by Strauss.

Another possibility could be to produce a brochure to improve the knowledge on bats and on the content of the Eurobats action plan. Therefore one part could be realized together and additionally every country could be asked to provide a specific brochure concerning the protection of bats on its own territory.

The different calendars, greeting cards... published by the ministries for environment or other public institutions could be used to show bats and to convey a positive message about these animals. One possibility could be to use a photograph, but besides the question which species to choose for the photograph, one has to consider that at the sight of a photograph of a bat some persons tend to react with rejection. A better effect could be obtained by using a nice drawing (of the type printed on the postcards sold by the SFEPM. (French association for research and protection concerning mammals)

At the moment, Germany and France are co-delegates for the continuation of the work on this topic. For Germany it is less complicated to work together with the secretary's office of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, located in Bonn.

France could take care of passing on the project to the French-speaking countries in northern Africa.

In view of the fact that England is the depositary of EUROBATS, obviously a close cooperation with England is also desirable.