

16th Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Tbilisi, Georgia, 4 – 6 April 2011

Secretariat Report



Staff

Effective 31 August 2010, the part-time Administrative Assistant Christine Boye has left her post for family related reasons. In order to compensate for the vacancy, the post of the second part-time Administrative Assistant Tine Meyer-Cords has been increased to 80% occupancy for the remaining part of 2010 and beginning of 2011. Since January 2011 the vacant post is temporarily filled by Ana Ferreira da Silva until a new permanent incumbent will be recruited.

Agreement Membership

Since the 6th Session of the Meeting of Parties Montenegro has completed the internal accession procedures to the Agreement and has informed the Secretariat that the instrument of accession is expected to be deposited still in March 2011. After some expected years of consolidated membership the Secretariat has now indications from a number of additional states preparing the accession to the Agreement. In particular Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus and Switzerland are in an advanced stage of preparations.

Publicity

Thanks to the outstanding work of the Advisory Committee and individual experts the EUROBATS Publication Series has become the flagship in Publicity. Volumes 2-5 have been “Bestsellers” even before being printed with thousands of pre-orders for each of them.

In 2010 the following actions have taken place:

- Feb 2010: Print of Publication Series No. 4 (5,500 English / 2,000 French /3,300 German) and re-print of No. 2 (500 English / 700 German).
- March-April 2010: Layout of English version of EUROBATS Publication Series No. 5 (monitoring guidelines) in English.
- April 2010: Launch and print of No. 5 (6,000 English) and re-print of French version of No. 4 (500 copies).

The Forestry leaflet has so far been produced in three national versions by Ireland, Italy and Denmark.

In 2010 the Czech Republic has produced a printed Czech version of Publication Series No. 2 and is planning Czech versions for the following volumes as well.

Further re-prints of some of the above listed publications are on-going in order to meet the continuing, actually still increasing demand.

The European Bat Night continues to be successful and still be growing every year again all over the Agreement area. The secretariat continues to make available the posters.

The Secretariat can also report that the Agreement excites continuing public interest resulting in requests for TV, Radio as well as Newspaper reports and interviews.

Year of the Bat

On the last day of the EUROBATS MoP6, the “Year of the Bat 2011 – 2012”, a joint CMS/EUROBATS awareness-raising campaign, was officially launched.

In the three months the campaign has been in operation, we have outlined a global campaign strategy, initiated strong working relationships with key partners, developed the Year of the Bat website, generated positive press coverage worldwide and created initial promotional material.

The campaign has also attracted new partners in important regions outside Europe, including the US, Philippines, South America and Australia.

Key developments and successes of the Year of the Bat campaign to date include:

- **Media** – The campaign has so far issued 3 press releases on 1) the threat of forest fires in Russia to bats (Aug), 2) the Year of the Bat launch (Sept) and 3) European bats’ meeting UN biodiversity targets (Oct), all of which were picked up by Reuters and other news services. The press releases received wide media coverage. In particular, the Year of the Bat launch earned extensive global media coverage.

Additional media activities include interviews given to BBC and Deutsche Welle radio. After EUROBATS’ participation in the North American Society for Bat Research symposium (27-30 Oct), the Year of the Bat was covered online in Popular Science (*Bat Researchers: Please pay attention to us after Halloween*, 31/10/2010), a widely read US science magazine. The international initiative the Economics of Eco-Systems and

Biodiversity (TEEB) has invited Year of the Bat to submit a column on bats and ecosystem services, which has reach 30,000 monthly web visitors and generated new audiences for the campaign as well as additional media coverage.

- **Website and Facebook** – The website has been favourably received by the general public, important target audiences (e.g., high level government staff and academics) and UN colleagues. The website has already attracted almost 22,000 visitors, with a steadily growing daily rate. The Facebook site has equally developed astonishing dynamics receiving daily new entries and followers as well as so far almost 150,000 post views.

Over 1,200 individuals and institutions from all over the world have until now sent messages to the campaign; information gathered shows that the site is appealing to all age groups, including children.

- **Ambassadors** – The Year of the Bat now has three honorary ambassadors, who are well known by the general public and/or scientific community around the world. They have all received numerous awards for their scientific work on bat conservation, biology and ecology:

- Dr. Merlin Tuttle (US)

- Prof. Paul Racey (UK)

- Prof. Rodrigo Medellín (Mexico)

- **Partnerships** – In addition to UNEP, CMS and EUROBATs, founding partners of the campaign include the IUCN Bat Specialist Group, Bat Conservation International (US), Bat Conservation Trust (UK), Lubee Bat Conservancy (US) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA).

Important new partnerships with key organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, are being discussed, particularly in the US. National partners who have recently come on board include the French Mammal Society (SFEPM), Nature & Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU)/Germany, the North American Society for Bat Research (NASBR)/US, the Australasian Bat Society and a continuously increasing number of additional bat conservation groups in Europe, Latin America and Australia.

Present steps for the campaign include expanding the website with additional information, generate global “bat community” interaction, producing regular e-bulletins (*Year of the Bat Chat*) and thanks to the substantive voluntary contributions from France

and Germany developing further promotional material (e.g., brochure, sticker, postcard series etc.). Other outreach activities are currently under preparation, such as a bat photo/drawing/poetry contest and the development of an educational programme.

Progress on bats in Africa

For many years already, African countries have expressed strong interest to include bats in their conservation activities and are unanimous in their desire for capacity building activities as a first step. The efforts of CMS and EUROBATS to make this happen have now beard fruit, thanks to excellent co-operation with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

FAO is organizing one week capacity building workshops on “Wildlife Health and the Human-Animal-Environmental Interface” in four different regions of Africa, aiming to cover the whole continent. One full day of these workshops will be fully dedicated to bats, their conservation needs as well as the vital ecosystem services they provide.

Supported by CMS and EUROBATS, the first of these workshops has taken place from 22 – 26 November near Johannesburg, South Africa, with the participation of 12 southern African countries.

Tuesday, 23 November, was fully dedicated to bats and the EUROBATS Secretariat has been able to organise an excellent team of South African and European experts who have given lectures on all relevant topics. The local “Gauteng and Northern region Bat Interest Group (GNORBIG, www.batsgauteng.org.za) also contributed exciting information about bats and organised life encounters with this fascinating species. The event was of course also used to promote “Year of the Bat” in Africa.

Special Projects

In 2009 – 2010 the Secretariat was able to finance and co-ordinate the following projects through EPI funding.

1. Workshop on the development of collaboration between bat workers and public health and veterinarian authorities: Implementation of bat conservation in Ukraine in conjunction with bat rabies.
2. Estimation of effects of pesticides on bats, Germany.
3. Pond bats (*Myotis dasycneme*) around Saint-Petersburg, Russia.

4. The research of forest-dwelling bat species and their roosting sites in mountain forest areas with different characters and states and with special regard to *Nyctalus lasiopterus*, Hungary.
5. Bats and Lighting of Monumental Buildings, Italy.
6. A new chance for Romanian bats – Completion of the proposed Sites of Community Interest in Romania with chiropterological data.
7. Conservation aimed inventory of the Mediterranean horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus euryale* occurrence in South-Western Romania.
8. Bats of Albania – from field work and monography to conservation and education.
9. Bats of the Bou Hedma National Park (Tunisia) - habitat use and conservation.

A number of further very promising project applications have been received in 2010 and 2011 awaiting final approval by the EPI sub-committee.