

Ingemar Ahlén 1936-2021

The tribute to Ingemar Ahlen published by his Scandinavian colleagues in *Fauna & flora* reveals the breadth and depth of his knowledge of the Swedish fauna. His career began in Lund with a thesis on red deer and he was soon appointed, at the young age of 32, to a professorship of forest vertebrate ecology at the Swedish University of Agricultural Science in Uppsala. He became widely known in 1977 when he published the book *Wildlife management – Conservation of threatened species in Sweden*, which later led to the founding of the Species Information Centre and the National Red List of Threatened Species and later to the Swedish Biodiversity Centre. Ingemar remained a strong supporter of the Swedish Society for Nature Protection throughout his life.



It is however for contributions to our knowledge of Scandinavian bats that Ingemar is best known among the Eurobats community. In the 1970s he became interested in bat echolocation and in 1981 published *The Identification of Scandinavian Bats by their Sounds*, a pioneering work that later developed to become a standard for acoustical identification of free-flying bats in the field, using a bat detector. That subject was to remain an abiding interest for him. Much of his career as a professor in Uppsala was spent developing methods for acoustic surveys of bats, which became the national standard.

He was also interested in bat migration, and made several important contributions in that field. For example, he discovered with his colleagues Hans Baagøe and Lothar Bach that 11 of the 19 species

that comprise the Swedish bat fauna fly out over the Baltic Sea for a distance of up to 14km at 10m above the sea before rising up to the height of wind turbine nacelles to feed on insects attracted by the warmer temperatures there. Already in 2002, Ingemar engaged in the wind industry debate and he was one of the first to warn of the threat that wind turbines later turned out to be for bats.

Ingemar was a leading figure in bat research and conservation in Sweden for more than 40 years, and was active long after his formal retirement.

Tony Hutson, Johnny de Jong, Peter Lina, Marie Nedinge, Paul Racey, Jens Rydell