

Draft Guidelines for consideration of bats in wind farm projects – revision 2014

Notes:

- Suren will number references, check if all references are referred in the text, and uniform the references
- Suren will highlight in the text all terms that are included in the Glossary
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Foreword

Following Resolution 4.7, approved at the 4th Session of the Meeting of Parties of EUROBATS (Sofia, Bulgaria, 22–24 September 2003), the Advisory Committee of the Agreement was requested to assess the evidence regarding the impacts of wind turbines on bat populations. Also, if appropriate, to develop voluntary guidelines for assessing potential impacts on bats and for the construction of wind turbines, taking into account the ecological requirements of bat populations. In response to this request, an Intersessional Working Group (IWG) was established during the 9th Meeting of the Advisory Committee (Vilnius, Lithuania, 17-19 May 2004). Some members of this IWG volunteered to prepare guidelines for assessing potential impacts of wind turbines on bats, which were adopted at the 5th Session of the Meeting of Parties (Ljubljana, Slovenia, 4–6 September 2006) as an Annex to Resolution 5.6. Those guidelines were published in EUROBATS Publication Series (Rodrigues *et al.* 2008). According to Resolution 6.12 of the 6th Session of the Meeting of Parties (Prague, Czech Republic, 20–22 September 2010), these guidelines (and any subsequently updated versions) should be the basis for national guidance to be developed and implemented, with consideration of the local environment.

The guidelines have subsequently been updated and the revised version (this document) was adopted at the 7th Session of the Meeting of Parties (Brussels, Belgium, 15-17 September 2014) as an Annex to Resolution 7.+.

1 Introduction

Presently, there are 52 bat species occurring in the EUROBATS area and listed under the Agreement. Bats are legally protected in all European countries. Those occurring in the EU countries are protected by the Habitats Directive; all species are listed in Annex IV of this directive (Member States are required to take the requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection for them in their natural range) and some of them additionally in Annex II (species of community interest whose conservation requires the designation of special areas of conservation). In addition, most species are redlisted in one or more countries in Europe and on the IUCN Red List (IUCN 2014).

Europe continues to be faced with the need to tackle climate change and environmental pollution and to find sustainable methods to meet demands for power production. The commitment to low-emission energy generation leads to an increased promotion of alternative methods, e.g., wind power, following Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC. Furthermore, there is a growing public and political awareness to reduce or stop nuclear power production.

Wind turbines have been described as a problem for birds for many years (Winkelman 1989, Phillips 1994, Reichenbach 2002). More recently, many studies have established that wind turbines can have negative impacts on bats (e.g., Arnett *et al.* 2008, Baerwald & Barclay 2014, Rydell *et al.* 2010a, Lehnert *et al.* 2014). Bat mortality at wind turbines occurs due to collision and/or barotrauma (Arnett *et al.* 2008, Baerwald *et al.* 2008, Grodsky *et al.* 2011). There are various reasons for bat presence, and resulting fatalities, around wind turbines. Clearly, the location of the turbines is an important variable (e.g. Dürr & Bach 2004). There are several European examples where an appropriate impact assessment has resulted in a wind turbine project being abandoned due to inappropriate siting with respect to bats. Annex 1 summarises studies done in Europe.

At low wind speeds, insect flight and bat activity occur at higher altitude, increasing the potential presence of bats near rotating blades. Security lights at the bottom of tower, the colour of wind turbines and acoustic effects are also suspected to attract flying insects and bats into the risk zone (Horn *et al.* 2008, Rydell *et al.* 2010b, Long *et al.* 2011). It has been suggested that lights for civil aviation above the nacelle may also attract bats, but Bennet & Hale (2014) rejected this hypothesis. Furthermore, the outer extremities of the blades may reach speeds as high as 250-300 km/h, making them totally undetectable for echolocating bats (Long *et al.* 2009, 2010a). In addition to the risk of direct collision, the wake effect drastically modifies the air pressure in the vicinity of the rotating blades, enlarging the risk zone and causing fatal barotraumata to flying bats (Baerwald *et al.* 2008). Altogether 27 European bat species have been found as casualties beneath turbines (Annex 2). Adequate avoidance and mitigation measures taking these risks into account should be included in the environmental impact assessment and in the permit delivered by authorities before the operating phase (see chapter on mitigation).

A first version of the guidelines was published in 2008, having the primary purpose of raising awareness amongst developers and planners of the need to consider bats and their roosts, migration routes and feeding areas when they are assessing applications for wind turbines. Guidelines should also be of interest to local and national consenting authorities who are required to draw up strategic sustainable energy plans. Furthermore, it was a base for national guidelines that were subsequently published in several countries.

A large amount of research has been carried out into the impacts of wind turbines on bats and the increased knowledge justifies the update of this document. These guidelines are applicable to larger wind farm developments in urban as well as rural areas, on the land as well as offshore. Small wind turbines are briefly mentioned, including an overview of the types of issues that need to be considered. Member countries should adapt these guidelines to their situation and prepare or update their national guidelines accordingly.

Taking into consideration that Parties of the EUROBATS Agreement are committed to the common goal of conserving bats throughout Europe, in situations where bat migration routes cross borders, any strategic environmental assessment (SEA) or environmental impact assessment (EIA) of wind energy plans and projects with the potential for cross boundary impacts should seek international co-operation from other governments.

2 General aspects of the planning process

Planning is usually organised at the local or regional level, and each locality or region has its own spatial strategies to deal with a broad range of planning issues, including economic development, transport, housing, environment and energy. Planning policies/strategies regarding wind turbines need to address various environmental factors.

Bats should **be considered in higher level regional planning** when designating priority areas for wind energy. Modelling may be a powerful tool in some cases at this regional planning level (Roscioni *et al.* 2013, 2014; Santos *et al.* 2013).

Since bats are present almost everywhere and bat mortality at wind turbines is recorded in nearly all types of landscapes, it is likely that bats will be affected by most wind farm developments. Therefore, competent authorities issuing permits and decisions on environmental conditions for wind energy projects should require an appropriate impact assessment for bats (which may or may not be part of a formalised, legal SEA or EIA process) to be carried out before they grant permission for the plan or project. It is also necessary to adopt policies and practices that reflect the experience gained at existing wind turbine sites to ensure that bat populations are not threatened. The aim of an impact assessment is to assess possible impacts on local and migrating bat populations, as well as to design site-specific avoidance or mitigation measures and monitoring programmes.

Competent authorities can regulate the construction and operation of wind turbines by means of planning and operation conditions and/or planning obligations. These conditions and obligations can apply to a range of issues including size, layout, nature and location of the project, and temporal curtailment of turbines. When assessing planning applications for wind turbines and when drawing up conditions or obligations, planners should be mindful of impacts such as fatalities, disturbance to bats, severance of roosts from foraging areas, severance of commuting or migration routes, and/or habitat loss or damage. Authorities should also require that the impacts of the turbines on bat populations are monitored during the post construction phase.

The strategy to reduce impacts should be based first on avoidance of impact, then minimisation (or mitigation) of impacts, and finally compensation of residual effects, in that order. This is known as the mitigation hierarchy.

Every phase of wind turbine developments (pre-, during and post-construction) can have an impact on bats to a greater or lesser extent.

2.1 Site selection phase

Bat mortality at wind turbines occurs due to collision and/or barotrauma (Arnett *et al.* 2008, Baerwald *et al.* 2008). The reasons that bats fly close to turbines and collide with them are numerous. Clearly, the location of the turbines in relation to bat habitat is an important factor (Table 1).

Table 1: Most important impacts related to the siting of wind turbines, from Bach & Rahmel (2004).

Impacts related to siting		
Impact	Summer time	During migration
Loss of hunting habitats during construction of	Small to medium impact, depending on the site and species present at that site.	Small impact.

access roads, foundations, etc.		
Loss of roost sites due to construction of access roads, foundations, etc.	Probably high or very high impact, depending on the site and species present at that site.	High or very high impact, e.g., loss of mating roosts.

Developers should consider locating wind turbines away from narrow bat migration and commuting routes as well as areas where bats gather for foraging and roosting. Wind turbines may act as landmarks during migration or commuting, which could exacerbate the problem of collision. Buffer zones should be created around nationally and regionally important roosts. The presence of habitats likely to be utilised by bats during their life cycle such as forests, trees, hedgerow networks, wetlands, waterbodies, watercourses and mountain passes should be taken into account. The presence of these habitats will increase the likelihood of bat presence. For example, large river corridors may serve as migration routes for bats such as *N. noctula* or *P. nathusii*. However, even at wind farms in large, open, agricultural areas, high levels of bat mortality still occur (Brinkmann *et al.* 2011). Information on habitats and locations where wind turbines may have an impact would aid decision making.

In European countries, many wind turbines originally proposed at inappropriate locations where impacts on bats would have occurred have not subsequently been built due to appropriate impact assessment. For instance, wind turbine projects near the internationally recognized hibernacula of Montagne Saint-Pierre / Sint-Pietersberg at the Belgian-Dutch border were refused by authorities for bat conservation reasons.

Wind turbines should not be installed within all types of woodland or within 200 m due to the high risk of fatalities and the severe impact on habitat such siting can cause for all bat species (Walsh & Harris 1996a, b). Mature broad-leaved forests are the most important bat habitats in Europe both in terms of species diversity and abundance (e.g. Meschede & Heller 2000, Kusch & Schotte 2007, Russo & Jones 2003). But also young forests or monoculture conifer forest can support a considerable bat fauna (Barataud *et al.* 2013). When wind farms are constructed within forests, it is often necessary to fell trees to clear ground for the construction of the wind turbines and supporting infrastructure. This could potentially result in a significant loss of roosts. Also, the consequent increase in forest edge habitats will improve foraging potential for bats (Kusch *et al.* 2004, Müller *et al.* 2013, Walsh & Harris 1996a, b), which could lead to an increase in bat activity closer to the wind turbines and further increase the risk of fatalities. Furthermore, such large changes in the habitat reduce the efficacy of the pre-construction studies in predicting the likely impacts of the development on bats.

In Northern European countries with high forest cover it may be necessary to include forests in the selection of sites for wind farms because of the lack of alternative locations. The importance of such areas for bat populations needs to be considered at a strategic level during the planning process. In these circumstances, particular attention should be paid to national guidance and to the planning process so that wind turbines are not sited in areas important for bats.

Despite the recommendation that wind turbines should not be installed within all types of woodland or within 200 m as clearly expressed in the previous version of these guidelines (and maintained and further supported in this version), wind farms have been allowed and are already operating in forests, albeit in a few European countries. Therefore, reluctantly, guidance for survey (see Chapter 3), monitoring (see Chapter 4) and mitigation (see Chapter 5) for wind turbines in forests is provided in these guidelines, and following these strictly is even more demanding than for other more acceptable locations, because of the increased risks to bats in this type of siting.

Buffer zones of 200 m should also apply to other habitats which are specifically important for bats, such as tree lines, hedgerow networks, wetlands, waterbodies and watercourses, as well as to any areas where high bat activity has been determined by impact assessment. Low levels of bat activity prior to construction cannot reliably indicate that there will be no impact on bats post construction because bat activity can change due to the presence of the wind turbines and supporting infrastructure, as well as from year to year. The buffer distance should be measured from the outer range of blades, not from the axis of the tower.

2.2 Construction phase

Construction phase activities that are likely to have an impact on bats should be planned, whenever possible, for times of the day/year when they not impact bats, e.g. no activities This requires local knowledge about the bat species present in the area, knowledge of the presence of hibernacula and roosts, and an understanding of their annual life cycle. A typical year in the

life of bats in Europe involves a period when they are active and a period when they are in hibernation. In central Europe generally bats are active from April to October and they are usually less active or in hibernation from November to March, but in the warmer south and in the maritime climate of the west, hibernation only occurs from mid-December to February (and in some mild winters some populations do not hibernate at all). Timing of activity and hibernation will vary according to geographical location (latitude and altitude) and also from one year to the next, depending on ambient weather conditions. Behaviour of some species will also play a part, as some cold-tolerant bat species are much more active during winter than others. The construction of the wind turbines and all supporting infrastructure for the wind farm, including turbine bases, crane pads, temporary or permanent access roads, cables for grid connection and buildings, should all be considered as potential sources of disturbance or damage.

Construction should take place at appropriate times to minimise impacts of noise, vibrations, lighting and other related disturbance on bats. Construction activity should be clearly delineated in any plan to ensure operations are restricted to least sensitive times in that area.

Reports also mention the use of the nacelles by bats as roosts. Gaps and interstices of the turbines should therefore be made inaccessible to bats.

2.3 Operational phase

Depending on the locality and predicted level of impact (Table 2), consideration should be given to the use of planning and operational conditions on development permissions for wind farm projects to restrict the operation of wind turbines at times of peak bat activity such as during the autumn migration and swarming periods. Possible planning and operational conditions could include shutting down the turbines during the night during critical periods of the year. Examples are given in chapter 5.

Table 2: Most important potential impacts related to the functioning of wind turbines, adapted from Bach & Rahmel (2004).

Impacts related to operating the wind farm		
Impact	Summer time	During migration
Loss or shifting of flight corridors	Medium impact	Small impact
Fatalities	Small to high impact, depending on the species	High to very high impact

Wind turbines and their immediate surroundings should be managed and maintained in such a manner that they do not attract insects (suggested measures to accomplish this recommendation are indicated in 5.1.1.3).

2.4 Decommissioning phase

Competent authorities can include conditions and/or planning agreements in development consents that extend to the dismantling phase. Wind turbines can be decommissioned easily and rapidly. Consideration should be given to carrying out decommissioning at a time of year that minimises disturbance to bats and their habitats. In drawing up site restoration conditions authorities should consider the need to include conditions that are favourable to bats and their habitats.

3 Carrying out impact assessments

Wind turbine sites can have a number of impacts on bats. During their construction flight routes, foraging habitats, maternity roosts and hibernacula can be destroyed or be abandoned by bats, and during their operation turbines can kill bats due to collision or barotrauma. For this reason it is necessary to conduct detailed bat surveys as part of impact assessments (which may or may not be part of a formalised, legal EIA or SEA process) for planned wind farms. The aim of impact assessments is to assess possible impacts on resident and migrating bat populations, as well as to propose site-specific protection or mitigation or compensation measures and monitoring programmes.

It is important to have a good knowledge, at a local level, of bat populations and of their biological and conservation status in each concerned site. This knowledge must be obtained by environmental impact studies. this will allow to implement appropriate mitigation measures.

During the last few years, a subject of debate has been whether there is a need for impact assessments relating to bats at all proposed wind farm sites or if it is appropriate to apply blanket mitigation measures without a prior impact assessment. Several studies have shown that, in the course of a year, most dead bats are found in late summer and autumn (Alcalde

2003, Arnett *et al.* 2008, Rydell *et al.* 2010a, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Amorim *et al.* 2012) and are frequently migrating species (Ahlén 1997, Ahlén 2002, Arnett *et al.* 2008, Rydell *et al.* 2010a, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Limpens *et al.* 2013). However, research has revealed, depending on the country and exact location, that resident bat populations can also be affected by wind turbines (Arnett 2005, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011). Bat fatalities also occur during spring and early summer, particularly in the southern parts of Europe (Zagmajster *et al.* 2007, Camina 2012, Georgiakakis *et al.* 2012, Beucher *et al.* 2013). Taking into account this information, impact assessments for bats should be carried out for all sites in order to identify if the proposed site location is appropriate, to adjust the site layout if necessary, to develop site-specific mitigation or compensation measures and to plan appropriate post construction monitoring. This obligation was confirmed in the resolutions 5.6 and 6.12 of the respective 5th and 6th Sessions of the Meeting of Parties of EUROBATS.

The mitigation hierarchy requires impacts to be avoided if possible but mitigated, or ultimately compensated for, if not. The impact assessment should identify the bat species, the times of year they are present and their spatial distribution (both horizontally and vertically) in relation to the proposed wind turbines. It should also correlate microclimatic conditions (such as wind speed, temperature, rainfall) with bat activity. This enables the design of a targeted avoidance and mitigation programme, which may include project abandonment, re-siting of some of the proposed turbines, site-specific use of blade feathering, higher turbine cut-in wind speeds and shutting down turbines temporarily to reduce or avoid bat mortality respectively, as well as post-construction monitoring. Reliable data on bat activity are also necessary to wind farm operators, in order for them to calculate the economic risk of the wind farm.

Current generations of tall wind turbines allow economical energy production in nearly all landscapes. Irrespective of the landscape it is important to realise that taller wind turbines do not necessarily reduce the bat mortality (Georgiakakis *et al.* 2012). On the contrary, larger rotors can increase mortality (Arnett *et al.* 2008). Studies have also shown that even in seemingly unsuitable bat habitats, such as large open agricultural plains, wind turbines can cause high bat mortality (Brinkmann *et al.* 2011). Wind farms on hill-tops and open coastal lowlands can have the same results (Georgiakakis *et al.* 2012, Bach *et al.* 2013b). When wind farms are constructed within forests the impacts can be exacerbated, particularly for resident bat populations. In these situations, it is often necessary to fell trees to clear ground for wind turbine construction, access roads and grid-connection cabling. The latter could potentially result in the loss of roosts and an increase in forest edge habitats, which could draw more bats closer to the wind turbines and increase the risk of mortality.

The bat impact assessment methodology must take into account the summer as well as spring and autumn migration seasons, but also during the winter period in southern Europe, in order to avoid or mitigate the impacts satisfactorily. It is important that competent authorities consult renowned bat experts in order to assess potential impacts on bats when considering wind turbine applications (e.g., Bach & Rahmel 2004, Dürr & Bach 2004, Mitchell-Jones 2004, MEEDDM 2010, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, SFPEM 2012, MEDDE 2014).

The following section provides information on non-statutory impact assessments. Developers will also need to undertake formal assessments to meet national legislation or national requirements under EIA and SEA regulations where appropriate. Since bat mortality occurs in nearly all landscapes, an impact assessment will generally be required before a competent authority can make a decision on whether to grant permission for a wind energy project.

Due to knowledge gained from recent research and technical developments during the last few years, the survey design recommended in this document is different from previous versions.

Goals of the impact assessment in relation to bats

A list of questions should be answered in a bat impact assessment in order for the potential impacts of a wind farm on bats to be adequately assessed, as follows.

- Which bat species are present at the location and in its vicinity?
- What are the activity levels of the species present and how does activity vary throughout the year (to take into account the full cycle of bat activity)?
- How are the bats using the landscape at the location and in its vicinity (are there maternity roosts, hibernacula, flight paths, foraging areas and/or migration routes)?
- What are the expected impacts of the project on bats and their habitats pre-, during and post-construction (e.g., disturbance; destruction or loss of function of roosts, flying routes or foraging sites; and mortality) and what is their significance?

- If significant impacts are expected, what site-specific measures will be applied to avoid, mitigate and compensate for these impacts?
- What method, scale and schedule of post-construction monitoring should be applied to the project?

Collision risk level for European bat species

Under European legislation, particularly the Habitats Directive, all bats are protected individually, which means that it is unlawful to kill a bat intentionally.

Fatality research studies during the last few years have shown that, due to their different behaviour and flight style, bat species are affected differently by wind turbines (Rydell *et al.* 2010a, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Ferri *et al.* 2011, Amorim *et al.* 2012, Camina 2012, Georgiakos *et al.* 2012, Santos *et al.* 2013). Bat species that fly and hunt in open space (aerial hunters) are at high risk of collision with wind turbines (Bas *et al.* 2014). Some of these species also migrate long distances at high altitude, which also increases collision risk (e.g., *Nyctalus noctula*, *Pipistrellus nathusii*). In contrast, gleaning bats, which tend to fly close to vegetation, have a lower risk of colliding with wind turbines.

In table 3 the collision risk for European and Mediterranean bats species for wind turbines in open habitats is shown. Where wind turbines are sited in broadleaved or coniferous woodlands or on woodland edges, this may significantly increase the collision risk for some species

Table 3: Level of collision risk with wind turbines (not micro- and small wind turbines) for European and Mediterranean bat species (state of knowledge: September 2014).

High risk	Medium risk	Low risk	Unknown
<i>Nyctalus</i> spp.	<i>Eptesicus</i> spp.	<i>Myotis</i> spp.**	
<i>Pipistrellus</i> spp.	<i>Barbastella</i> spp.	<i>Plecotus</i> spp.	
<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>	<i>Myotis dasycneme</i> *	<i>Rhinolophus</i> spp.	
<i>Hypsugo savii</i>			
<i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i>			
<i>Tadarida teniotis</i>			

* = in water rich areas

** = exclusive *Myotis dasycneme* in water rich areas

3.1 Pre-survey assessment

The aim of the pre-survey assessment, as a first step, is to identify which species are known from the local area and which landscape features could be used by bats. The results of this assessment will inform the survey design. Given the impacts that wind turbines can have on bats, it is recommended that a pre-survey assessment should be undertaken for all new onshore and offshore wind turbine proposals. The pre-survey assessment is a preliminary step to gather evidence about the likely impact of the proposal on bats, but it cannot be used as a substitute for the impact assessment surveys. It can, however, help the developer in his decision concerning the suitability of the site for wind turbine construction and help to design properly a detailed survey.

Consideration should be given the following as part of the pre-survey assessment.

Collation and review of existing information

A range of information sources should be reviewed to identify potential habitats for bats at the location and in its vicinity and to identify existing records of bats in the area.

These should include:

- recent aerial/satellite photographs/maps/habitat survey maps,
- species distribution maps,
- databases of protected areas (e.g., Natura 2000 sites),
- records of known roosts and bat sightings (for offshore sites this could include records from oil rigs, lighthouses and other open sea or coastal records),
- existing knowledge of bird migration routes as they could provide information on bat migration,
- existing knowledge of European bat migration data,
- papers and reports on ecology of bats.

Where appropriate, consultations with key organisations that hold data on bats should also be undertaken. These organisations could include:

- local bat groups,

- biological records centres,
- wildlife trusts,
- nature conservation organisations,
- Bat Conservation Trusts,
- natural history museums,
- university research organisations,
- local, regional or provincial authorities;
- consultants that have worked in the area.

It is recommended that for land-based wind turbines the pre-survey assessment should consider all available data on bats within at least a 10 km radius of the wind turbine locations. In some cases a larger radius may be appropriate (e.g. in the case of important colonies of species which commute long distances to foraging sites (Annex 3)).

Migration routes over land and offshore should also be considered. Particular consideration should be given to bat migration routes when wind turbines are proposed close to prominent landscape features such as river valleys, upland ridges, upland passes and coastlines. For offshore proposals, the location of the wind turbine in relation to migration routes between principal land masses and islands should also be taken into account, especially where there are records of bats on islands, oil rigs, etc.

This assessment can exclude areas which are inappropriate locations for wind turbines from a bat perspective (e.g., vicinity of important bat roosts, areas protected and designated for bat conservation, broadleaved or coniferous woodlands, 200 m buffer zones from woodland edges, tree lines, hedgerow networks, wetlands, waterbodies and watercourses).

3.2 Survey

3.2.1 Survey design

Survey design will differ depending on the proposed location of the wind turbines and the results of the pre-survey assessment. Consideration should be given to:

- the spatial scale of the survey, which should closely reflect the size and number of wind turbines and supporting infrastructure such as crane pads, access roads and grid connections,
- the potential use of the site by bats (informed by the pre-survey assessment),
- how the above may affect the timing of survey work.

Larger wind turbines blades have a typical rotation zone of between 40 and 220 metres above the ground and therefore consideration should be given to the height at which survey work should take place. Such turbines are most likely to affect high flying species, although it is recommended that all species are considered and assessed within the overall impact assessment.

Whenever possible (for example, if there is a meteorology mast erected or planned for the site) it is recommended that the activity of bats should be recorded at the height of the collision risk zone, e.g., at the bottom of the blade swept zone of a wind turbine.

Given the potential impacts of wind farms on bats, it is essential (for an accurate and complete impact assessment) to take into account the full cycle of bat activity throughout the year. This includes investigating the possibility of hibernation roosts being present and surveying them if they are. The cycle of bat activity can start in mid-February and end in mid-December, but is likely to be shorter in northern parts. In some regions of southern Europe (e.g., coastal Greece and Montenegro), hibernation may be absent and surveys should therefore continue all year round. The intensity of survey work throughout this period may also vary depending on the location (e.g., due to the presence of migrating bats) of the proposed wind turbines and the potential use of the site by bats.

Surveys should provide information about roosting, foraging and commuting by local bat populations, along with identifying bat migration through the area. As a consequence it is recommended that a greater intensity of survey work should be undertaken in spring and autumn when bats are migrating, because this activity is more difficult to observe, tends to be more unpredictable and is dependent on weather conditions. The timing of such surveys could be guided by local knowledge about when hibernating bats emerge, when maternity colonies disperse, when mating begins and when swarming has been observed in the area.

3.2.2 Survey methods

3.2.2.1 Land-based wind turbines

Surveys of proposed wind turbine sites should employ the best methods and equipment for the relevant habitat. This generally includes the use of hand held bat detectors and automated bat detector systems. Investigation of potential roost sites should also be conducted. In particular, in areas with a large coverage of limestone karst, previously unknown roosts are frequently discovered. When wind farms or infrastructure associated with wind farms is planned in forests, more intensive methods are required, such as bat detector surveys above the canopy, trapping to verify species and status (using mist nets for bats and / or harp traps) and, exceptionally, radio tracking to find tree roosts.

Due to the range of heights of new wind turbines, existing structures (towers or masts) at the study site should be used to deploy automatic detection systems at the relevant heights (preferably at the proposed blade swept zone) whenever possible. Weather conditions should always be monitored and recorded whilst conducting surveys (temperature, precipitation, wind). For wind farm repowering and extension studies, existing wind turbines can be used to install automated bat detector systems in the nacelle (see Brinkmann *et al.* 2011).

Experiments with automated detectors attached to kites or balloons (e.g., Sattler & Bontadina 2006, Fenton & Griffin 1997; McCracken *et al.* 2008; Albrecht & Grünfelder 2010) have shown that these methods provide data of limited use. This is because bats appear to behave differently at height when structures (such as wind turbines and masts) are present in comparison to when these structures are absent. In the absence of structures, bats appear to be rare at height (Grunwald *et al.* 2007, Ahlén *et al.* 2009, Albrecht & Grünfelder 2010). It is generally assumed that ground data can be used to assess the activity at nacelle height because there are several studies showing a correlation between the two variables (e.g., Behr *et al.* 2011, Bach *et al.* 2013). However, in some situations no strict correlation was found (Collins & Jones 2009, Limpens *et al.* 2013). Wind farm surveys should, therefore, record bat activity at least within the blade swept zone.

It is recommended that intensive activity surveys should be undertaken within a 1 km radius of each proposed wind turbine throughout the pre-construction survey period. If the locations of the wind turbines are not yet specified, the survey should cover a 1 km radius around the proposed area. Surveys should cover the wind turbine locations and all habitats on site that are likely to be used by bats. Searches for maternity and hibernation roosts should be undertaken within a 2 km radius (depending on the expected species and the habitat(s) present) and existing known roosts should be checked within a 5 km radius; if important roosts are found, they should be monitored in subsequent years.

To provide an indication of migration routes, an intensive survey, to identify an increase in migratory species, should be undertaken in spring and late summer / autumn.

Wind turbines should, as a rule, not be installed within all types of woodlands or within 200 m due to the risk that this type of siting implies for all bats.

Where wind farms are proposed in forests (despite advice to the contrary), the issue of bats flying at height above the tree canopy should be claimed. Because bat activity within and above the forest can differ significantly (Kalcounis *et al.* 1999, Collins & Jones, 2009, Plank *et al.* 2011, Bach *et al.* 2012, Müller *et al.* 2013) and it may not be possible to detect foraging and migrating bats above the trees from the ground, special attention should be given to recording bat activity above the canopy (see Bach *et al.* 2012, Müller *et al.* 2013).

The focus should be on high flying species that forage or migrate above the canopy (e.g., *Pipistrellus* spp., *Hypsugo savii*, *Barbastella* spp., *Eptesicus* spp., *Vespertilio murinus* and *Nyctalus* spp.) and tree roosting species like *Plecotus* spp., *Myotis bechsteinii* and *Myotis nattereri*.

3.2.2.2 Offshore wind turbines

For several years we have known that bats cross open seas during migration (Ahlén 1997, Boshammer & Bekker 2008, Ahlén *et al.* 2009, Hüppop 2009, Bach & Bach 2011, Frey *et al.* 2011, Meyer 2011, Skiba 2011, Bach *et al.* 2013a, Eriksson *et al.* 2013, Poerink *et al.* 2013, Seebens *et al.* 2013, Anonymous 2014). For this reason, offshore wind turbines should be surveyed in the same manner as land-based turbines (Bach *et al.* 2013c, Cox *et al.* 2013). Clearly, this presents more of a challenge than land-based turbines because surveys will have to be undertaken from boats, lighthouses, buoys, etc. Surveys for offshore wind farms should be concentrated in spring (April-June) and autumn (August-October/November), unless data (such

as bats found on nearby oil rigs, islands, etc.) indicate their presence at any other time of the year. During a monitoring study at a research platform, Seebens *et al.* (2013) found that resident bats can hunt at least 2 km out to sea during the summer months. Therefore, at proposed nearshore and wind farm sites bat activity should also be assessed during the summer months.

3.2.2.3 Micro- and small wind turbines

Increasing numbers of small wind turbines (SWTs; also referred to as micro- or domestic wind turbines) are installed globally. No consistent definition of what constitutes an SWT is available and their size (both hub height and swept area) and design varies greatly, so their exact number is difficult to establish. However, the World Wind Energy Association (WWEA) reports that up to 650,000 SWTs of capacity <100kW had been installed globally by 2010, generating 382 GWh annually (WWEA 2012). Because of their smaller size, compared to larger wind turbines, SWTs are often installed in a much wider range of habitats compared to their wind farm counterparts (RenewableUK 2012).

The evidence of effects on wildlife available for larger turbines cannot be directly extrapolated to SWTs (Park *et al.* 2013) because the latter are often installed in closer proximity to human habitation and also habitat features such as hedgerows, tree lines and water features (RenewableUK 2012), which are likely to be used by a diverse range of bat species. The limited evidence base currently available for the effects of SWTs on wildlife concerns a limited turbine size range. In some European regions (e.g., some counties in Germany) the development of guidelines for SWTs is in progress, but in many areas no impact assessments are required by the planning authorities. ***The recommendations presented here are restricted to impacts of SWTs with hub height <18m.***

Published experimental evidence specific to SWTs shows that bat activity (primarily *Pipistrellus* spp. and a smaller proportion of *Myotis* spp.) can be reduced by up to 50% in close proximity (1-5m) of operating SWTs. This effect diminished at longer distances from turbines (20-25m) (Minderman *et al.* 2012), suggesting that bats avoid operating SWTs. A laboratory study by Long *et al.* (2009) showed that ultrasonic echoes returned from moving SWT blades were imperfect, potentially increasing collision risk by lowering detection of moving blades, and providing one possible mechanism for why bats avoid SWTs. Especially in areas where suitable habitat (e.g., feeding areas, commuting routes) is already limiting, disturbance or displacement effects as a result of such avoidance may have adverse effects on local populations. Species preferring open habitats, relatively high fliers), species able to exploit more cluttered habitats or those that frequently use “edge or gap habitat” are likely to be more at risk. This could include *Barbastella* spp., *Eptesicus* spp., *Plecotus* spp., *Rhinolophus* spp., *Pipistrellus* spp. and *Myotis* spp. Systematic studies on collision mortality estimates for SWTs have not been published. Minderman *et al.* (in review) found no carcasses during 171 systematic carcass searches at 21 SWT sites and within this sample only 3 owners (out of 212 surveyed) reported bat casualties. Combined with anecdotal evidence (BCT 2007) this shows that in some cases bat mortality should be a serious consideration.

In summary, from the evidence currently available, it is clear that (1) operating SWTs can cause disturbance and/or displacement of bats thereby limiting availability of potentially valuable habitat, and (2) bat mortality can be an issue at some sites. Thus, the following guidelines are proposed when siting SWTs with hub height <18m, to minimise potentially adverse effects on bats:

a) Siting. SWTs should be sited at least 25m away from habitats commonly associated with higher levels of bat activity, including:

- a. Large hedgerows or treelines
- b. Broadleaved or coniferous woodlands or woodland edges
- c. Single mature trees, particularly when suitable for roosts
- d. Watercourses, ponds or lakeshores
- e. Buildings (occupied or derelict, including bridges and mines) where suitable for roosts. Where proposed development is on or near to buildings any construction work inside or near roof spaces should include checks for the presence of roosts (e.g., see Hundt *et al.* 2012).

b) Surveys. For proposed sites where rare or vulnerable bat species are known to be present, or within 25m from above habitat features (3.2.2.3.a), surveys of bat activity and roosts are required:

- f. At least two site visits with hand held detectors, covering the maternity period, to check for the presence of roosts within 50 m of the SWT. One of these should be a dawn visit.
- g. Continuous automatic recorded acoustic surveys during the entire season (April-September in most areas) using appropriate detectors that are able to detect and distinguish all species present.

3.2.3 Survey effort

Depending on the local geographical conditions and on the species hibernating in the region, dates for the beginning and the end of the bat active period (and thus the survey year for acoustic detection) will vary. Migration may last longer in some regions and hibernation is shorter in southern Europe than in northern parts of the continent. It may therefore be necessary to extend bat activity surveys from mid-February to the end of November (or even longer in southern Europe, where hibernation may be absent). Survey effort will also vary. Although the collision risk in, for example, Germany seems to be lower in spring than in late summer and autumn, it is important to recognize whether the area plays an important role for spring bat migration. Survey effort should be tailored to the regional conditions, scale of the individual development and the potential impacts. Monitoring studies have shown that bat activity can change by more than 50% from one night to the next, even when the recorded weather conditions are the same. The reason appears to be changing insect concentrations or land use (mowing a meadow, cattle on another grassland, etc.). To comprehend how the bat activity on the single survey visit relates to the long term bat activity on a site, the bat activity per survey visit should be compared and matched with the bat monitoring data (see chapter 3.2.4.1).

Therefore it is crucial to conduct surveys on an adequate number of nights from the different stages of bat activity (for dates see 3.2.4.1 e). These stages are as follows:

- (i) commuting between post-hibernation roosts,
- (ii) spring migration,
- (iii) activity of local populations, checking for flight paths, foraging areas, etc. and concentrating on high flying species,
- (iv) dispersal of colonies and the start of autumn migration,
- (v) autumn migration, mating roosts and territories
- (vi) commuting between pre-hibernation roosts (late hibernating species of Southern Europe).

3.2.4 Type of survey

3.2.4.1 Onshore survey

a) Investigation of important roost sites

New roosts should be searched for within a 2 km radius (the exact radius depending on the expected species and habitat(s) present) and known roosts should be checked over at least a 5 km radius to assess stages (iii) and (iv) (see above) of bat activity (May to October). Potentially important roosts (including maternity and hibernation roosts as a minimum) should be subject to detailed survey. Additional help during the search can be gathering information from the local residents and speleologists (in karst areas). Possible important sites can be determined based on bat traces, presence and abundance of recorded bats.

b) Bat detector surveys on the ground

1. Manual bat detector surveys at ground level (transects) should be undertaken throughout the bat active season to determine a bat activity index (number of bat contacts per hour) for the study area (encompassing at least 1 km radius around the planned siting of the wind farm). The detector system used should cover the frequencies of all bat species that may be present. It should also allow the determination of all relevant species or species groups. Acoustic observation should be accompanied with visual observation as it can yield a lot of important additional data, such as spatial identification of commuting routes, certain roost types and swarming sites, and also to enhance species identification. In the results the percentage or number of feeding buzzes should also be recorded. During the manual bat

detector survey an automated detector system that can link to GPS-files should be used to verify the location of registered bat contacts.

2. Automated bat detector surveys using high-resolution ultrasound recorders or frequency division detectors should be carried out during each manual detector survey visit, ideally at each proposed wind turbine location, throughout the bat active season, to determine a site specific bat activity index (number of bat contacts per hour). If this is not possible, the bat detector should be placed on a representative number of turbine sitings in each type of habitat, relief and topography present (for example: hill tops and valleys). In the results, the percentage or number of feeding buzzes should also be record. The detector system used should cover the frequencies of all bat species that may be present. It should also allow the determination of all relevant species or species groups. Within forests, continuous automated bat detector monitoring (at least one automated detector system for 2-3 planned wind turbines) should be conducted above the canopy, during the whole season.
3. At least one high-resolution ultrasound recorder or frequency division detector and recording system should be installed in the survey area for monitoring bat activity continuously during the whole season. Depending on the number of proposed wind turbines, the size and the structural diversity of the survey area, more than one detector and recording system may be necessary.

c) Activity surveys at height

Automatic recording bat detector surveys (high resolution ultrasound recorders or frequency division detectors – see below) should be placed on meteorology masts, wind turbines or other suitable structures in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm to establish a bat activity index and species composition throughout the bat active period where possible, at least during key periods of the year (see ground measurements). However, caution should be applied when comparing ground results and height results monitored by different types of bat detector (the range and accuracy of detectors differs between systems). Therefore, the same detector systems should be used both at ground level and at height to produce comparable data.

d) Equipment requirements

At present there is a vast range of different brands and types of detector systems available on the market ranging from heterodyne detectors and frequency division detectors to full spectrum detectors which can be hand held during the survey visit and as an automated system. In order to obtain representative and comparable data, it is very important to use equipment of the correct specification and condition.

The manual bat detector system used during the survey must adequately cover the frequencies used by all high and medium risk species. In some areas this might be fulfilled by using heterodyne detectors with the possibility of time expansion, but in most areas it is recommended that a full spectrum, time expansion, or frequency division detector system is used. The detector and microphones must be of good quality. It should be possible to back up the system with recorders (ideally including a GPS receiver) in such quality that thorough analysis of the recorded ultrasonic calls afterwards is possible.

The automated bat registration system used should be a full spectrum detector system including frequency division detectors, with microphones of good quality. The microphone sensitivity needs to be checked and if needed calibrated every year. Microphones with considerably deteriorated parameters (reduced sensitivity), e.g. due to humid environment, should not be used.

In all surveys, the detector system and its settings must be standardized for each project. These settings should be recorded and provided in any subsequent survey reports, as they can influence results.

e) Timing of survey

Manual bat detector surveys from the ground

The number and seasonal distribution of the survey visits will depend on the local geographical conditions and on the presence of species with a very short hibernation period. All survey visits should be undertaken in appropriate weather conditions (ideally no rain (although short showers are acceptable), no fog, wind <5m/s, temperature >7°C).

One “survey visit” can consist of several nights that are needed to cover the whole study area.

- 15 Feb - 15 Apr¹ (stage i): one survey visit every 10 days, first half of night from sunset for 4 hours,
- 15 Apr² - 15 May (stage ii): one survey visit every 10 days, first half of night from sunset for 4 hours and include 1 whole night in May for stage iii,
- 15 May - 31 Jul (stage iii): one survey visit every second week, always a whole night,
- 1 - 31 Aug (stage iv): one survey visit every 10 days, always a whole night; During this stage one should also search for mating roosts and territories,
- 1 Sep - 31 Oct (stage v): one survey visit every 10 days, in September 2 whole nights, in October first half of night from sunset for 4 hours. During this stage one should also search for mating roosts and territories. At the end of September and October at large lakes or along rivers on the European continent, *Nyctalus noctula* have been noted in large numbers hunting in the afternoon up to 100 m above the ground. Therefore the survey should start 3-4 hours before sunset, where this behaviour of *Nyctalus ssp.* is suspected, and be continued for 4 hours after sunset,
- 01 Nov -15 Dec² (stage vi): one survey visit every 10 days (if weather conditions are appropriate), first half of night from half an hour before dusk for 2 hours.

Automated bat detector survey at the proposed wind turbine locations

Ideally, at least in one night during each manual detector survey visit, an automated bat detector system should be placed at the proposed location of each wind turbine. If not possible, it should be placed on a representative number of turbine sitings in each type of habitat, relief and topography present (for example: hill tops and valleys).

Continuous automated bat detector monitoring

An automated detector system (see 3.2.4.1 b. 3) should be installed in the survey area to monitor bat activity during the whole season (the start and end of which will depend on the regional conditions). The system should be set to record bat activity from one hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise. In some regions, e.g., along rivers and at lakes, bats may hunt during the afternoon after September. In these situations, detector systems should be set to record bat activity from at least 3-4 hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise.

Within all types of woodland

As previously stated, wind turbines should not be installed within woodlands or within 200 m of woodlands due to the high risk of fatalities. However, in countries where this is still allowed, in addition to the manual detector surveys described above, bat activity should be monitored above the canopy using an automated detector system. The system should be set to record bat activity at the proposed turbine locations during the bat active season, from one hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise. It is also recommended to use mist nets, in order to confirm the presence of species that are very difficult to detect or recognise by acoustic methods.

3.2.4.2 Offshore survey

For offshore wind farms it is more difficult to survey bat activity. Few methods have been developed and robustly tested for surveying in this environment (Ahlén *et al.* 2007, 2009, Meyer 2011, Sjöllema 2011, Seebens *et al.* 2013). Official guidelines for offshore bat surveys have been developed for Germany (Bach *et al.* 2013c), covering the Baltic Sea. Although Denmark, Sweden and Poland have started to include bat surveys for offshore proposals, there are no official guidelines for these countries. Experience in the Baltic area suggests that it is most productive to combine observations from both the land and the sea. Bruderer *et al.* (2005) developed a system that has the potential to distinguish bats and bird in tracking radar but it requires further studies before it can be used systematically.

Surveys for offshore proposals should concentrate on the migration period. Near-shore surveys should also include summer activity.

a) Surveys from land should:

- be at prominent land marks like headlands, thought to be locations where bats leave the shore heading in the direction of the planned wind farm,

¹ Applies mainly to southern Europe, for *Miniopterus schreibersii*, *Rhinolophus euryale*, *Myotis capaccini* and *Pipistrellus* spp.

² Applies mainly to place where there is no hibernation or where some species are already active.

- include bat detector surveys (manual and automatic) from the ground,
- include long-term automatic surveys with a bat detector mounted on a lighthouse or any other suitable structure (for activity index and groups of species),
- include the use of infrared or thermal imaging camera whenever available.

b) Surveys at sea should:

- comprise boat surveys (transects or stationary anchor points) in the area of the proposed wind farm (it may be possible to combine boat transects with nocturnal bird surveys),
- include continuously automated bat detector monitoring on oil platforms, research platforms and buoys,
- include, if possible, surveys from regular night ferries crossing between two landmark points that are suspected to be important for bat migration (e.g., Puttgarden-Rødby or Bornholm-Sassnitz in the Baltic Sea, Dover-Calais in the English Channel),
- include, if possible, tracking radar from a coastal point in combination with boat transects.

c) Timing of surveys:

Boat surveys for offshore wind farms should be carried out from the beginning of April until the beginning of June, and from the beginning of August until the middle or end of October (depending on the locality) at least twice a week. For near-shore wind farms it may also be necessary to cover the summer period (June/July) to detect resident bats foraging offshore.

Continuously automated bat detector monitoring should cover both migration periods and (for near-shore wind farms) also June/July.

3.2.5 Survey report and evaluation

As the survey report is aimed at people who have little or no knowledge of bat ecology and bat surveys, the report should set out:

- the species known to be present in the geographical and administrative area and their status,
- the methods and equipment used during the surveys (with equipment settings, when these may influence the results) and their limitations,
- the survey dates, survey start and end times and weather conditions recorded along with corresponding sunset and sunrise times and the reason these dates and start times were chosen,
- the species identified during the survey and their observed behaviour (passing through, foraging, swarming, migrating) and habitat use, as well as the date and hour of observation. The results should be presented in a format that enables the reader to interpret the data. Data could be presented, for example, by species recorded, by bat activity through the year, by activity through the night, or by activity at different heights,
- maps to illustrate the spatial and temporal distribution of bat activity of different species or groups of species,
- the differences in bat activity according to different seasons and night phases,
- the differences in bat activity at different heights, if a weather mast (or another technique) has been used,
- the likely impacts of the wind farm on bats
- mitigation/compensation measures;
- suggested scheme of post-construction monitoring and the proposed impact of various options of its results on the scope of the mitigation/compensation measures.

Bat activity should be presented as activity indices (e.g., bat contacts/hour or bat activity units/hour), calculated for instance for survey visits, nights and average for different periods of bat activity like spring, summer and autumn. Activity indices of individual species, species groups and of all bats can then be subject to analysis. The evaluation should account for local and regional variations in legal protection and conservation status. Impacts may differ according to different turbine layouts or where habitats provide different functions for the species present. For some species (e.g., *Nyctalus noctula* and *Pipistrellus nathusii*) there is a positive correlation between activity at ground level and activity at nacelle height but this is not the case for *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (e.g., Brinkmann *et al.* 2011).

A conflict analysis should then be presented for each wind turbine for each species present, and the mortality risk should be assessed and presented. Every wind turbine siting and the entire supporting infrastructure must be evaluated accordingly and proposals made to limit the impacts. The approach should be to apply measures to avoid impacts in the first instance, but where this is not possible to mitigate or, lastly, compensate for them. For more details about reporting and analysis see Dürr (2007) and Kepel *et al.* (2011).

3.3 Repowering / Extension

For these projects it is necessary to combine bat activity surveys including both manual bat detector surveys (see 3.2) and automated bat detector surveys at nacelle height. In addition, for a wind farm extension the surveys should be combined with a search for bat fatalities at the existing wind turbines. The activity surveys (manual bat detector survey visits and automated bat detector survey at each planned wind turbine) should take into account the proposed locations of any new turbines. The monitoring methods proposed in chapter 4 are to be applied during the whole bat activity season. A reduced number of manual survey visits in summer and migration time is recommended. This is due to the fact that the emphasis lies on the continuous automated bat detector survey at nacelle height; the ground based detector survey completes the picture of bat activity in the vicinity of the wind farm.

Measurement of bat activity at nacelle height from neighbouring similar wind turbines in combination with the search for bat fatalities, will enable an assessment of existing collision issues and a better prediction of the collision risk at the new planned wind turbines than a manual survey at ground level only. If the size of the new wind turbines is not similar to the original wind turbines, as is usually the case in repowering projects, a fatality search should be carried out in order to compare the effect of different sized turbines.

4 Monitoring the impacts

Monitoring of operating wind farms is essential to increase our understanding of their potential impacts on different bat species. Although assessing the cumulative effects of existing and proposed wind farms and of other infrastructure development is usually required in formal EIA, only individual wind farms have been monitored to date. Specifically, there are no studies of the cumulative impacts of wind farms placed along a migration route. Nevertheless, it would be very important to develop methodologies to assess the cumulative effect; some researchers (e.g., Barclay *com. pers.*) support the idea that bat mortality should be estimated per MW and not per turbine.

To assess the impacts of wind turbines on bats, studies should use standardised methods to produce comparable results.

Monitoring the impacts of wind energy on bats will only have a scientific value if it takes into account the original status of bat populations in the area before wind farm installation. If more than 3 years elapse between the pre-construction surveys and the construction of the wind turbines, it may be necessary to repeat the pre-construction surveys. This point should be highlighted in national guidelines or legislation.

At least three years of monitoring during the operational phase of the wind farm are necessary to assess the impacts on resident species (attractiveness, changes in behaviour and mortality) and on migrating species (changes in mortality) and to highlight possible yearly variations. According to the results, another 3 years may be necessary to gain a complete understanding of the changes.

A comprehensive monitoring scheme should focus on both activity levels and mortality rates. The post-construction activity monitoring will assess changes in bat activity and will also help to understand the results of mortality monitoring.

4.1 Monitoring of activity at nacelle height

Manual acoustic monitoring on the ground may be carried out during construction to evaluate if building wind turbines brings any significant disturbance to bats and to their roosts, but during the operation phase of the wind farm monitoring of activity at nacelle height will be more important. It should last at least three consecutive years and cover the annual cycle of bat activity (spring until autumn, depending on the geographical region). It is important to install bat detector microphones at nacelle height to record bat activity in the area of greatest potential impact, the area swept by the rotor. In order to obtain standardised and therefore comparable data, bat detectors must allow identification of calls down to species or group of species level.

Acoustic monitoring should follow Brinkmann *et al.* (2011). The following technical information should be described in the reporting:

- detector type and analysis software,
- sensitivity parameters of the detector,
- location of the detector within the nacelle,
- working and failure periods of the detector,
- height of the nacelle and the blade length.

Mages & Behr (2008a, b) give examples about erecting detectors into turbine nacelles and refer to some of the constraints (e.g., noise problems).

The recorded bat activity should be analysed taking into account the season, the time of night and weather data such as wind speed and air temperature. This enables the development of a strategy to mitigate impacts by, for example, curtailment of the turbines at specific times of the year and night using an algorithm that predicts risk of victims from these data.

Thermal imaging cameras give valuable data on this issue (e.g., Horn *et al.* 2008), so if possible they should be used. If the efficiency of tracking radar is proven, this too can be considered.

Putative migration routes should be assessed by checking for the presence of bats along bird migration routes in the area, analysing automatic recording of ultrasound at height, and performing late afternoon and dawn observations (visually and, if possible, with an infrared camera; ideally with a thermal imaging camera).

4.2 Monitoring of mortality

As mortality is the greatest impact that wind turbines have on bats and on some bat populations, it has to be eliminated or at least reduced to a minimum to comply with the obligations of the Habitats Directive and of national laws on protected species. The main methods currently used to reduce or avoid mortality are blade feathering, increased turbine cut-in wind speeds and shutting down turbines temporarily during higher risk times of the night or year. However, the increase of the cut-in speed may be not 100% efficient because some species, especially migrating ones, will still fly in wind speeds exceeding 10 m/sec (Hurst *et al.* 2014). Monitoring of mortality is therefore still necessary to assess the efficacy of these measures. The methodologies are discussed extensively in Brinkmann *et al.* (2011) and Limpens *et al.* (2013) and are summarised here.

The number of fatalities can vary significantly according to the siting of the wind farm and the species present. It is important to be aware that the number of carcasses found does not equate to the real number of bats that are killed. This is because the count process is biased due to several factors, such as: removal of casualties by scavengers or predators; searcher efficiency (which depends, among others factors, on the type and height of ground cover underneath the turbines – i.e. detectability); and effort invested in the survey (monitoring schedule, time interval and size of the searched area). Additionally, some bats fly away and die later on due to internal injuries; however, this situation is not quantifiable. Therefore, mortality monitoring will consist in three stages: carcass searches, trials to obtain correcting factors for the biased estimates, and estimation of true mortality rates.

4.2.1 Searching for bat fatalities

a) Search plot size

Ideally, the search process should take place around the wind turbine within a radius equal to the total height of the wind turbine, as bats that collide can be blown away from the turbine by high winds (Grünkorn *et al.* 2005, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011). However, in most cases this is impractical due to the height of vegetation or other obstacles. In this situation, it is advisable to search a smaller surface area that can be kept clear of vegetation all year round or at least covered with only very short vegetation. **The radius should not be less than 50 m and, if possible, kept clear of vegetation.** If the search area is a square, it should be marked out by 4 corner poles. Alternating coloured poles should be used to indicate 5 m intervals on the two opposite sides of the square. In this case, surveyors should walk from one side of the square to the other, checking 2.5 m either side of the line walked. In some circumstances (ploughed field or uneven terrain) it might be necessary to reduce the checked spacing between transects or to use a trained search dog (see 4.2.2.b). If the search area is a circle then the surveyors can hold a 50 m long rope attached to the base of the wind turbine mast and walk in circles around the wind turbine, checking 2.5 m either side of the line walked. After each rotation the rope should be shortened by 5 m and another rotation made in the opposite direction. This will

systematically cover the standard search area of 1 ha, but the rope method applies only on flat ground without obstacles.

If, for some reason, the entire area cannot be searched, the percentage of the searched area should be calculated for each wind turbine in order to correct the final mortality estimation.

b) Number of sampled wind turbines

If possible, every wind turbine in the wind farm should be sampled during each survey visit. In the case of larger wind farms a subsample of the turbines may be randomly selected, stratified by habitat and/or WF features. Classic statistical power analyses, based on the expected number of fatalities and the variation accounted in other studies, will yield the optimal sample size.

c) Time interval between samples

The smaller the time interval between samples the higher the number of retrieved fatalities, thus the smaller the bias from carcass removal by scavengers. For all wind farms one carcass search every 3 days (2 days interval between controls) is recommended. For oversized wind farms, the number and the choice of sampled turbines can follow an agreed random survey design. For comparison of results according to different time intervals see Arnett *et al.* 2005.

d) Monitoring schedule

The entire activity cycle should be assessed. Mortality monitoring should start as soon as bats become active after hibernation and last until they get back into hibernation. Through this cycle different periods are recognized considering the different specific geographical and meteorological conditions of each region. For example, in southern Europe monitoring may start, in the vicinity of important roosts, as early as mid-February and finish as late as mid-December.

e) Search methods and recording results

The searcher should walk each transect at a slow and regular pace, looking for fatalities on both sides of the line. Bat fatalities can sometimes be found through observation of mobile insects (for example wasps and grasshoppers), which are attracted to carcasses and draw the searcher's attention. The search should start one hour after sunrise, to minimise removal of carcasses that have appeared during the previous night by daytime scavengers and when the lighting conditions enable dead bats to be distinguished.

The searcher should note the species; position of the carcass (GPS coordinates, direction relative to the wind turbine, distance to the tower, the wind turbine number); its state (fresh, a few days old, decayed or remnants); the type of wounds; an evaluation of the date of death; and the vegetation height where the carcass was found (see below).

It is necessary to record weather conditions (air temperature, wind strength, wind direction, any storms etc.) between survey visits, as these are all likely to impact on levels of bat activity at the site and therefore the number of fatalities.

A discussion of methods used to estimate bat casualties has been published by Niermann *et al.* 2007.

4.2.2 Estimation of fatalities

Mortality estimators [see 4.2.2 c] are necessary to improve estimates of the real number of bat killed at the monitored wind farms, namely by correcting for expectable sources of biases such as: removal of carcasses, searcher efficiency and percentage of area searched.

If necessary, legal authorisation should be obtained from authorities to remove, handle and transport protected species carcasses.

a) Carcass removal trials

To estimate scavenging and predation, trials must to be carried out 4 times a year in order to take into account seasonal changes in predation rates caused, among other things, by modifications in vegetation height and variations in the activity of scavengers throughout the seasons. Bats, mice, passerines or one-day old chicks (preferably dark) can be used for these trials. As bat flesh is likely to be less attractive to carnivores than bird or mouse flesh, bats carcasses are ideal

to use in carcass removal trials. If frozen, bat bodies need to be thawed before use. It is useful to mark discreetly the test-bodies to make sure that the carcasses are effectively removed from the site or eaten, instead of being only moved within the search area. This would allow carcasses to be distinguished as trial carcasses and not true fatalities. Each trial should include at least 20 carcasses and last at least 10 consecutive days (ideally e.g.. daily from day 1 to 7 and then at day 14 and 21), to determine how long a carcass stays on the ground before being eaten, removed or buried by mammals, birds and insects.

b) Searcher efficiency trials

- Classification of ground cover:
Searcher efficiency depends on the ground cover, because the height and type of vegetation during different seasons will affect the visibility of bat carcasses. It is therefore important to assess the detectability of dead bats in different classes of vegetation height, different percentages of vegetation cover and different habitat/physical features (such as the vegetation types, obstacles on the ground, slope etc.). More details are provided in Habitat Mapping p. 26 & 28 in Arnett *et al.* 2005, Arnett *et al.* 2010, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Limpens *et al.* 2013. These classes are important for the statistical analysis. It has to be taken into account that some estimators (e.g., Körner-Nievergelt 2011) need to have the ground cover classified separately in equidistant rings around the turbine.
- Trials:
The searcher efficiency should also be tested according to the different vegetation heights present in the area. In this context, trials should be repeated in different seasons in order to assess search efficiency upon different stages of ground cover development, as well as light and weather conditions. The same searchers should be kept throughout the year or, if new surveyors are required, searcher efficiency trials should be repeated.
Bat carcasses (or equivalent) should be randomly distributed at the trial plots. The coordinates of each carcass should be noted, along with the direction and distance to the mast, the type and height of vegetation around each carcass, and the number of the nearest wind turbine.
The searcher should proceed according to the normal carcass search protocol. The overall aim is to assess the percentage of carcasses that are found by the searcher.
Some authors (e.g., Warren-Hicks *et al.* 2013) have been mentioning the need to combine carcass removal and search efficiency trials in an integrated trial, rather than being treated as two independent processes. Since the probability of persistence and detection are both time dependent and dependent on one another, this integration would be highly effective and desirable. In fact, integrating the carcass persistence and searcher efficiency trials can simultaneously produce time dependent carcass persistence and searcher efficiency functions for the same set of trial carcasses.
- Use of trained dogs:
A dog specially trained to search for bat carcasses can be used for mortality monitoring, but the efficiency of a dog-handler team must be tested the same way as above at each site (Arnett 2006, Paulding *et al.* 2011, Paula *et al.* 2011, Mathews *et al.* 2013). Carcass decomposition and weather conditions such as wind speed and air temperature can play important roles in dogs scenting capabilities (Paula *et al.* 2011) and should be taken into account. It is advisable that dogs and dog handlers attend organized training. If applicable, dog handlers need to obtain a licence for this purpose. The contract with the dog handler, who will always work with his dog, should specify if such training was received.

Dogs can use different methods of marking such as barking and pointing. This is preferable to a dog trained to retrieve, as the bat carcass will be identified but left *in situ* for the surveyor to make notes as necessary. In difficult terrain (thick undergrowth) pointing dogs are often equipped with a beeper collar that changes its type of signal when the dog is pointing. Dogs are already being used to increase the efficiency of the search in some countries in Europe such as: Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain and Germany.

c) Mortality estimators

Different algorithms have been developed to estimate bat mortality. Most of them were based on Winkelman's formula (1989), designed for birds, although this formula has also been used in France for bats (André 2005, Dulac 2008). Since then, different estimators have been developed for bats, namely in the United States (Erickson 2000, Huso 2010), United Kingdom (Jones 2009), Germany/Netherlands (Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Limpens *et al.* 2013), Switzerland (Körner-Nievergelt *et al.* 2011) and Portugal (Bastos *et al.* 2013). Most of them now include a correction factor for the % of area effectively surveyed.

It is advisable to test a variety of different methods as results can vary considerably. For example, Winkelman's formula has a tendency to overestimate bat mortality, even when the correcting factor for % of the area effectively surveyed is added.

Usually, the estimation of bat mortality (real number of bats killed at a wind farm) is calculated using the carcasses found on the search plot of each turbine multiplied by correction factors that take into consideration the probability of a carcass to persist in the search plot (carcasses persistence), the probability of a carcass to be found by an observer (searcher efficiency), and/or the probability of a carcass to be within the searchable area (search area).

Some estimators didn't take into consideration the irregular distribution of the carcasses in the searched area, although a large percentage of these is likely to be found within 30 metres from the tower (Cornut & Vincent 2010, Rico & Lagrange 2011, Sané 2012, Beucher & Kelm 2013). Also more, until very recently, if no bats were found under the turbines then it was not possible to estimate the number of bat fatalities for this specific site, and additionally no confidence intervals could be assumed together with a estimation (see below).

Bernardino *et al.* (2013) compared seven widely used estimators and highlighted their assumptions and limitations. The conclusion was that a universal estimator that would produce unbiased estimates under any study design or circumstances is still not available. The authors identified factors that can improve the quality of the estimates, such as (1) shorter search intervals consistently applied throughout the year, (2) larger search areas and (3) higher searcher efficiencies. In order to improve its effectiveness, some new estimators take some of these disadvantages into consideration:

- Huso (2010) developed an estimator that takes into account the partial coverage of the area beneath the turbines and assumes that carcasses persistence times have exponential distributions. This features a constant "hazard rate" implying that carcasses remain equally attractive to scavengers over time.

- A German estimator was developed in a national research project financed by the BMU (Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Security (Niermann *et al.* 2011, Körner-Nievergelt *et al.* 2011)). In contrast to Huso's estimator this estimator assumes that a confidence interval cannot be lower than the number of dead bats actually found under the wind turbines. Niermann's webpage shows how to calculate the mortality according to Körner-Nievergelt 2011, (only in German) <http://www.kollisionsopfersuche.uni-hannover.de/>. One important advantage of Körner-Nievergelt 2011 approach is that the formula can be adapted to different distributions of searcher efficiency or carcass removal rates.

- Péron *et al.* (2013) used superpopulation capture-and-recapture models (used for population sizes). This approach integrates time and age variation in

the parameters and accounts for possible extended carcass persistence with influence in the detection process between search intervals.

- Bastos *et al.* (2013) produced stochastic dynamic simulations that consider the non-constancy and inter-dependency of the commonly used parameters, such as search efficiency and carcass persistence, for bias-corrected estimates. This framework can provide algorithms capable of estimating potential real mortality even in the absence of detected carcasses. This approach is proposed as an innovative starting point in preventing the wrong interpretations of the false zeros meaning by the decision-makers.

- The model of Körner-Nievergelt *et al.* (2013) also allows estimation of fatalities on the basis of extrapolation of sampled data (for example for nights within the search interval). In difference to other approaches, these authors developed a model that allows skipping the carcass search process, calculating real fatalities only on the basis of wind speed and bat activity. In this context, the study design has to be the same as the study design proposed by the authors in terms of turbine type, rotor diameter, species composition, activity patterns, wind conditions, bat detector types, recording sensitivity and geographical region.

The Portuguese Wildlife Fatality Estimator (www.wildlifefatalityestimator.com) was created by Bio3 in partnership with Regina Bispo and aims to help users to properly apply methodologies and save time in the data analysis (Bispo *et al.* 2010). The Wildlife Fatality Estimator is a free online platform that can be used to estimate bat mortality associated with wind farms or other human infrastructure, using three commonly used estimators: Jain *et al.* 2007, Huso 2010 and Körner-Nievergelt *et al.* 2011. The platform is still under development, and from the 3 application modules (“Carcass Persistence”, “Fatality Estimation” and “Search Efficiency”) only the first two are currently fully operational.

d) Cumulative effects

As many years often elapse between the pre-construction survey and the post-construction monitoring, other wind farms may have been constructed in the vicinity by the time monitoring starts at the site in question. Therefore a new evaluation of the cumulative effects assessed for the EIA should be carried out at the end of the monitoring period, in order to refine the previous estimation of impacts on bat populations and help to determine appropriate mitigation measures to reduce mortality.

5 Avoidance, mitigation and compensation

Potential options for mitigation of Small Wind Turbines include stopping SWTs from running during darkness hours, increasing the cut-in wind speed and preventing turbine rotation at low wind speeds. Although in some situations a form of mitigation may be required (e.g. when collision mortality has occurred), there is no evidence yet that either of the above mitigation options are practical and/or effective for SWTs. We therefore stress that until more data become available, appropriate and careful siting decisions as described above are crucial. These guidelines do not relate to micro-turbines that are installed on boats, but we recommend that if the boat is within 20 m of (mature) hedgerows or tree lines, broadleaved or coniferous woodlands or woodland edges, single mature trees (particularly when suitable for roosts), watercourses, ponds or lakeshores, or buildings during the night, that the turbine should be turned off.

Larger wind turbine developments can have significant impacts on bats (see Chapter 2). Impact assessments (including formal EIA) should determine the potential impacts of a particular project on bats and their habitats pre-, during and post-construction and what their level of significance is. Since bats are protected by international and national legislation in all European countries, if significant adverse impacts are expected, impact assessments should also provide effective measures to avoid and then to mitigate (if avoidance is not possible) these impacts and, finally, to compensate for any residual effects. This will also be necessary if any unpredicted significant adverse impacts are detected during post-construction monitoring. The effectiveness of the implemented avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures should also be monitored and changes applied as necessary.

Appropriate measures for avoidance, mitigation and compensation for any wind turbine development can only be designed using knowledge about bat species presence and activity gleaned from surveys carried out as part of an impact assessment. Such measures will also be determined by the characteristics of the individual wind turbine development. Thus, these measures will always have to be site-specific and are very often species-specific. Furthermore, expert knowledge regarding the ecology of different bat species is essential to develop adequate measures.

Avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures will be discussed here according to the relevant impacts on bats they are designed to address.

5.1. Fatalities

The most significant impact of operating wind turbines on bats is direct killing (Arnett *et al.* 2013a), caused due to collision and/or barotrauma (Arnett *et al.* 2008, Baerwald *et al.* 2008). Migrating bats and bats from local sedentary populations are often killed by wind turbines (Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Voigt *et al.* 2012), sometimes in large numbers (Hayes 2013, Arnett *et al.* 2013a).

However, bats may also be killed during construction of wind turbines and supporting infrastructure, for example in roosts: hibernating individuals and bats in maternity roosts are particularly vulnerable.

Since reliable data on population sizes on European level are still not available for most bat species, the impacts of mortality caused by wind turbines (or by any other cause) on bat populations are not known. However, it is evident that, due to their extremely low reproductive output (Barclay & Harder 2003), any increase in mortality rate could be critical. Also, since fatalities of bats from long-distance migratory populations regularly occur (Voigt *et al.* 2012, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011), it is evident that wind turbines affect bat populations over significant geographical distances. Furthermore, there was 121.5 GW of installed wind power capacity in Europe at the end of 2013 with an expected annual growth rate over 10% (Corbetta & Miloradovic 2014), so cumulative effects and a cumulative increase in bat mortality have to be considered.

Since all European bats are protected by international and national legislation, any intentional killing is forbidden by law. Therefore, avoidance, or at least reduction to a minimum, of bat mortality by wind turbines, is not only a priority for bat conservation, but also a legal obligation in Europe. Setting any general thresholds for bat mortality and/or wind speed that would trigger mitigation of bat fatalities is not only considered arbitrary, ineffective, inadequate and unsustainable (Arnett *et al.* 2013a, see also Chapter 3), but in Europe also questionable from a legal perspective.

Based on this, effective measures to avoid and to mitigate bat fatalities have to be designed for every wind turbine development on case-by-case basis through the appropriate impact assessment process. As stated above, the sequence of measures should be avoidance of fatalities first and then mitigation (if complete avoidance is not possible), while the possibility to compensate for fatalities is, at best, questionable (see 5.1.3).

5.1.1. Avoidance

5.1.1.1. Planning of site layout

The best strategy to avoid bat fatalities, to benefit both bat conservation and in economic terms, is preventive planning. This is where bat activity is taken into consideration during the screening and scoping phases of a wind farm development project. Even at a strategic planning level, where authorities identify sites that may be appropriate for wind farm development, possible impacts on bats should be considered.

Due to the high risk of fatalities (Arnett 2005, Behr *et al.* 2006, Rydell *et al.* 2010b, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011) wind turbines should not be installed within broadleaved or coniferous woodlands or within 200 m of woodlands (see also 2.1).

The most effective avoidance of fatalities, at least for some species, can be achieved by careful planning of the site layout. In general, the highest mortality is expected in areas of greatest bat activity such as migration and commuting routes, important foraging areas, and close to bat roosts, particularly for species and populations that are at higher risk due to their specific ecology. Appropriate impact assessment will gather sufficient information on spatial and temporal patterns of bat activity and on bat roosts on the proposed development site, especially

in the areas of the proposed wind turbine sitings, which will enable reliable decision-making on site layout.

Where wind turbines are proposed in areas of high bat activity or close to roosts they should be re-sited away from these areas. If re-siting of these wind turbines is not possible, individual wind turbine locations should be abandoned accordingly. If high bat activity is recorded throughout the development site, abandonment of the project should be considered, to avoid the necessity for complex mitigation schemes that may be unsuccessful.

5.1.1.2. Prevention of roost sites destruction while bats are present within them

Destruction of bat roosts is prohibited by law in the EU and many other European countries and must be avoided. Even if bat roosts are not legally protected, their destruction should still be avoided.

Precautionary measures include avoiding demolition work or felling particularly during sensitive periods such as the maternity and hibernation seasons, or whenever the bats are present, checking the roosts prior to destruction and having a bat specialist monitoring the demolition, in order to take any emergency measures that might be necessary to prevent fatalities. In the EU and many other countries this can only occur under a licence and bats must not be harmed.

Appropriate impact assessment will gather information on bat roosts at the proposed development site (see 5.2), and appropriate periods for any construction works (and any other activities that may affect bats), will be best determined by impact assessment on a case-by-case basis.

5.1.1.3. Elimination of attraction factors

During construction and operation of a wind farm, all known factors that can lead to bats being attracted to the site and to the wind turbines must be eliminated.

Bats roosting in nacelles have been reported in Europe in both onshore (Hensen 2004) and offshore (Ahlén *et al.* 2009) wind turbines. Although roosting in the nacelle itself does not seem to cause significant fatalities (Dürr & Bach 2004), searching for roosts in wind turbines and emergence/re-entry from/into such roosts and swarming at the entrance can lead to fatalities. Therefore, all wind turbines, particularly the nacelles, should be designed, constructed and maintained in such a manner that they do not support roosting bats – all the gaps and interstices should be made inaccessible to bats.

Areas around wind turbines disturbed by their construction may provide conditions favorable for aerial insects upon which most bats feed (Grindal & Brigham 1998, Hensen 2004). Insects are attracted to lights (security lights at the bottom of tower (Beucher *et al.* 2013) and by the heat produced by some nacelle types (Ahlén 2002, Hensen 2004, Horn *et al.* 2008, Rydell *et al.* 2010b)). Concentrations of insects in the areas around wind turbines thus entice bats to forage in these areas, which can lead to fatalities (Kunz *et al.* 2007, Horn *et al.* 2008, Rydell *et al.* 2010b). The colour of wind turbines (Long *et al.* 2011) and some acoustic effects (Kunz *et al.* 2007) are also suspected to attract flying insects and bats into the risk zone. Therefore, wind turbines and their immediate surroundings should be managed and maintained in such a manner that they do not attract insects (i.e. the concentration of insects in the wind turbine vicinity should be reduced as much as possible, but not such that insect abundance is affected elsewhere on the site). Some of the measures that can accomplish this and that should be implemented at all wind farms are:

- using lighting that does not attract insects,
- using lighting only when needed, except where it is mandatory for safety reasons,
- preventing the retention of water and the growth of weeds and new shrub growth in the immediate area of wind turbine construction (wind turbine operation zones, access roads, etc.),
- new hedges, other lines of shrubs and trees, and forests or orchards should not be allowed to become established in the 200 m buffer zone around turbines and such structures should not be used as compensation measures within the given distance.

5.1.2. Mitigation

5.1.2.1. Blade feathering and increase of cut-in wind speeds

Blade feathering and increase of cut-in wind speeds are currently the only proven ways to reduce bat fatalities at operating wind farms (Arnett *et al.* 2013a). Very extensive studies in North America (Baerwald *et al.* 2009, Arnett *et al.* 2011, 2013c) and Europe (Behr & von

Helversen 2006, Bach & Niermann 2013) proved that small increases of turbine cut-in speed and feathering of blades resulted in significant reductions in bat fatalities (by 50% or more). Bat activity is significantly correlated with wind speed and other meteorological variables such as air temperature, relative humidity, rain and fog (Horn *et al.* 2008, Bach & Bach 2009, Behr *et al.* 2011, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Amorim *et al.* 2012, Limpens *et al.* 2013). A substantial proportion of the bat fatalities at operating wind farms occurs during relatively low wind speeds (Arnett *et al.* 2008) and high temperatures (Amorim *et al.* 2012). This explains why an increase of the cut-in speed and/or feathering of blades during low wind speed conditions reduces bat mortality.

However, bat activity and wind tolerance may differ significantly at one site between years (Bach & Niermann 2011, 2013, Limpens *et al.* 2013) and even more between sites (Seiche *et al.* 2007, Arnett *et al.* 2008, Rydell *et al.* 2010a, Arnett *et al.* 2011, 2013c, Limpens *et al.* 2013), regions and countries (Dürr 2007, Rydell *et al.* 2010a, Dubourg-Savage *et al.* 2011, Niermann *et al.* 2011, Georgiakakis *et al.* 2012, Limpens *et al.* 2013) and especially between species (Dürr 2007, Seiche *et al.* 2007, Rydell *et al.* 2010a, Bach & Niermann 2011, Dubourg-Savage *et al.* 2011, Niermann *et al.* 2011).

Therefore, reliable and effective thresholds for cut-in wind speed and temperature (or algorithms based on these and other weather variables, spatial and temporal patterns of bat activity and species present) should only be determined on a case-by-case basis, following the results obtained during the impact assessment (see also Chapter 3). It would be inappropriate to set national or European standards.

Power loss and the economic cost of blade feathering and increase of cut-in wind speeds are inevitable in most cases, but studies have shown these to be negligible (e.g. <1% of total annual output) (Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Arnett *et al.* 2013c). Finely tuning pre-construction rough cut-in speed and temperature thresholds into refined post-construction site- and species-specific multifactorial models very efficiently reduces excessive production losses and bat fatalities at the same time (Lagrange *et al.* 2011, 2013).

Multifactorially modeled blade feathering and increase of cut-in wind speeds offers an ecologically sound and economically feasible strategy for reducing bat fatalities at wind energy facilities and should be implemented broadly.

However, any model should be developed and implemented very carefully, especially those based on bat activity at nacelle height to statistically predict fatalities, because of very large standard deviation of such predictions (Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Limpens *et al.* 2013). Models based on site-specific levels for wind and temperature, e.g., below 7.5 m/s or 12°C (Bach & Niermann 2011, 2013), and/or other environmental conditions (e.g., Lagrange *et al.* 2013), allow to eliminate bat fatalities due to their flight activity at nacelle height. Authorities should therefore support this opportunity, determined on case-by-case basis.

Where wind farms development is still permitted in forests, blade feathering or increasing cut-in wind speeds should be obligatory, due to the exacerbated risks that this type of siting implies for all bats (see 2.1).

CASE STUDY 1 - Belgium

In southern Belgium (Wallonia), when sensitive bat species are detected during the EIA, blade feathering is implemented below 6 m/s (measured at nacelle height) for a period of six hours from sunset, between the 1st of April and the 30th of October when air temperature is higher than 8° Celsius (or 10°C in lowlands) in the absence of rain .

During autumn migration, between the 1st of August and the 15th of October, blade feathering is also implemented between sunset and sunrise when wind speed is below 7 m/s (measured at nacelle high), and air temperature higher than 5° Celsius (or 8° C in lowlands).

Electricity production is theoretically reduced by 2 % in southern Belgium (Wallonia) using these thresholds.

Source: Thierry Kervyn (Belgium)

CASE STUDY 2 - Germany

(+++)

5.1.2.2. Deterrents

Acoustic (Szewczak & Arnett 2007, Arnett *et al.* 2008, Arnett *et al.* 2013b), visual (light) and electromagnetic (Nicholls & Racey 2009) deterrents have not yet been proven to be effective at preventing bats from approaching wind farms, let alone to reduce bat fatalities at operating wind

farms. Also, the impact of such measures on the public and on other wildlife, like birds or insects, has not been assessed to date (Amorim *et al.* 2012). Therefore, although research into deterrents may have potential, they still cannot be considered as a practical mitigation strategy to avoid bat fatalities.

5.1.3. Compensation

In contrast to impacts on habitat, where loss of habitat on site may be compensated by protection or restoration of habitat off site, it is not possible to compensate for fatalities. Since population level impacts of bat mortality caused by wind turbines are still unknown, the development of well-based, adequate and measurable compensation schemes is not possible at the population level. This particularly concerns long-distance migratory populations, because it would require improving their birth and survival rates hundreds of kilometres away from the development site (at often unknown roost sites), at a large scale and before the operational phase of a wind farm (Voigt *et al.* 2012). All of these are strong arguments that fatalities have to be avoided or mitigated as much as possible.

However, since some fatalities may still occur even after all known options for avoidance and mitigation are exhausted, measures regarding the protection and improvement of habitats should be implemented, in order to increase adult and juvenile survival rates of the impacted populations of resident species.

5.2. Loss/Deterioration of Habitats

Construction of wind turbines and supporting infrastructure may destroy or damage bat roost sites, flight paths and feeding areas. This is especially the case when extensive changes in the landscape and habitats are proposed, such as when wind farms are constructed within forests (see 2.1). Nevertheless, high activity of foraging and commuting bats has been recorded at operating wind farms elsewhere (e.g. Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Amorim *et al.* 2012). Loss of roost sites, especially in areas where roosts are scarce, is likely to have a greater impact than changes in habitat due to wind turbine construction (e.g., Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Amorim *et al.* 2012). However, even a small decrease in the foraging potential of the landscape (e.g., as a result of the use of deterrents – see 5.1.2.2) may have long-term effects such as a decrease in the survival and reproductive capacity of individuals and hence the maintenance of populations, particularly migratory ones. The destruction of roost sites when bats are present (and the resulting fatalities) is not only illegal, but it is also impossible to adequately mitigate or compensate for, and must be avoided (see 5.1.1.2).

Construction of wind farms (including supporting infrastructure) may also increase the foraging potential of the habitat for bats (e.g., an increase in clearings and inner edges within forests and the resulting attraction of aerial insects in otherwise less structured landscapes) could lead to an increase in bat activity and, thus, risk of fatalities.

If significant impacts on bat roosts, foraging area and commuting paths are expected, avoidance, mitigation or compensation schemes should be designed to cancel them. If any of these measures conflict with measures for avoidance/mitigation of fatalities, prevention of fatalities must always take precedence.

5.2.1. Avoidance

The best strategy for avoiding bat habitat loss/deterioration, both in terms of bat protection and from the economic point of view, is preventive planning. Wind farms should, whenever possible, be planned away from existing or potentially (e.g., recently planted forests) important bat habitats, as determined by impact assessment.

Re-siting of individual turbines and supporting infrastructure and abandonment of individual turbine locations should be considered (more details in 5.1.1.1), as well as abandonment of the whole project if habitats at the development site are particularly important for bat conservation.

Wind turbines should not, as a rule, be installed within all types of woodlands or within 200 m due to the exacerbated risks that this type of siting implies for all bats (see 2.1).

5.2.2. Mitigation

Construction of wind turbines and supporting infrastructure should be planned and carried out in such a way that important bat habitats are disturbed as little as possible. Natural habitats such as broadleaved or coniferous woodlands, wetlands and grasslands, even as small patches in expansive agricultural landscapes, and landscape features such as hedgerow networks, individual trees, water bodies or water courses increase the likelihood that bats may roost,

forage and/or commute in these areas. Therefore, disturbance of these habitats should be avoided.

5.2.3. Compensation

Compared to avoidance and mitigation, compensation is less efficient, both in terms of bat conservation and from the economic point of view – it is more costly and it is less certain that it will have the desired outcomes. Therefore, it should be used only as a last resort, when significant impacts cannot be avoided or mitigated, e.g., inevitable loss of tree roosting potential when wind farms are constructed within forests.

When it is necessary, compensation should be informed by the impact assessment and should be species-specific, adequate, at least proportional to loss, timely, permanent and should not destroy other natural features. Possible means of compensation are protection, improvement and/or restoration of affected habitats and their functional elements, especially around roosts, foraging areas and flight paths. When infrastructure associated with wind farms is constructed within broadleaved or coniferous woodlands, it is necessary to compensate for lost roosts by appropriate management of nearby woodlands, especially through protection of old, decaying trees.

The efficacy of purpose-built artificial roosts such as bat boxes requires further research. Therefore these cannot be relied upon as sufficient compensation for destroyed roosts. However, some studies suggest that bat boxes can be effective for certain species in certain habitats and regions (Ciechanowski 2005, Baranauskas 2010).

Generally, compensation measures should be implemented outside of the development site, but within the range of the affected local population.

5.3. Disturbance

Although possible sources of disturbance and their effects on bats and their populations are still not completely understood, it is evident that bats may be disturbed by human activities and especially by major development. Disturbance can impact bats at the population level (Natural England 2007). All bats are protected from any deliberate disturbance by international legislation in the EU and many other European countries, and such protection should be implemented in the others.

The high activity of foraging and commuting bats at operating wind farms that often occurs (e.g., Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Amorim *et al.* 2012, Bach *et al.* 2013b), as well as the numbers of bat fatalities suggests that large wind turbine operation does not deter bats through disturbance. However, turmoil, vibrations, noise and the use of lighting during construction may disturb bat foraging and commuting activity (e.g., Schaub *et al.* 2008, Stone *et al.* 2009), roosting (e.g., Parsons *et al.* 2003) and hibernation (e.g., Daan 1980, Thomas 1995), when they are the most vulnerable to disturbance (Natural England 2007). All bat species are sensitive to disturbance in roosts, but while foraging and commuting they are not equally susceptible to different disturbance sources and even levels (e.g., Fure 2006).

Annual and daily life cycle of bats varies across Europe and it also differs between species (see 2.2 and 3.2.1).

Based on this, an impact assessment should determine if construction activities will disturb bats in their roosts (particularly during the maternity and hibernation seasons) or whilst foraging and commuting is expected. If significant impacts of disturbance on bat roosts, foraging and commuting are expected, measures should be developed and applied to avoid and to mitigate. Compensation is not considered to be possible.

5.3.1. Avoidance

The best strategy to avoid disturbance of bats is careful planning of the construction timetable.

- Disturbance of occupied roosts, particularly hibernacula and nurseries where fatalities may result (see also 5.1.1.2.), should be prevented by restricting construction activities in their vicinity.
- Disturbance to foraging and commuting should be prevented by restricting some construction activities during times of the day and year when bats are active (i.e. construction should generally be planned for the daytime).

Appropriate impact assessment will gather sufficient information on temporal patterns of bat activity and on bat roosts at the proposed development site to facilitate the design of an appropriate construction timetable that minimizes impacts.

5.3.2. Mitigation

When supporting infrastructure for the wind farm has to be constructed within a forest, disturbance may be inevitable. Disturbance of nursing and hibernating bats should still be avoided and therefore construction should not be proposed during the maternity and hibernation seasons if roosts are present. Where significant infrastructure construction is proposed it may be appropriate to phase this so that disturbance does not occur across the whole site at the same time. In all cases, lighting should not be used unless it is mandatory for safety reasons.

6 Research priorities

During the last years several studies have been carried out on bats and wind turbines (e.g., Baerwald *et al.* 2008, Rydell *et al.* 2010b, Bernardino *et al.* 2011, Brinkmann *et al.* 2011, Ferri *et al.* 2011, Amorim *et al.* 2012, Camina 2012, Georgiakis *et al.* 2012, Beucher *et al.* 2013, Lagrange *et al.* 2013, Santos *et al.* 2013). Investigations to date have concentrated on the influence that wind farms may have on individual bats through collision and barotrauma and how to mitigate these effects whilst enabling wind farms to generate sufficient economic returns. However, our knowledge of the impact of wind turbines and wind farms on the environment and particularly bats is still limited and there is a need for further research. Further research projects are needed to increase our understanding on the impact of wind farms on bats either at a population level or in different landscapes.

Compared to birds, the general knowledge about bat biology is rather selective. In particular, insufficient is known about bat migration throughout Europe. This information is key to evaluating the risks of proposed wind farm projects. Furthermore, research projects should assess the risk of existing wind farms for individual bats but, more importantly, assess the impact of these collisions on bat populations. There is still an urgent need to find different solutions that will minimise impacts for future wind farm construction.

The following questions outline areas where research is needed:

1. Why do bats collide with turbines?
2. What are the best methods to assess and later predict wind turbine impacts on bats (mainly mortality) both pre-construction and through post-construction monitoring?
3. How effective are the mitigation measures (mainly change of cut-in speed and feathering) that are used today (% reduction of collisions)?
4. How large is the effect on populations, particularly of migrating species?
5. What is the cumulative impact of wind farm development?
6. What mortality rate would negatively affect the population of a given species?
7. Do we need to avoid installing wind turbines in some habitats/landscapes completely because of high mortality rates?
8. What is the behaviour of bats migrating over large water bodies, especially seas, what is their number?
9. Are there any negative effects from Small Wind Turbines on bats?

The following sections (6.1 to 6.7) outline the research needs (*priorities are marked in italics*) and suggest possible investigation methods.

6.1 Why do bats collide with turbines?

In Europe, during the last five years, many projects have included post-construction monitoring of bat mortality at wind farm sites. The aim of this work was to collect data that enabled the development of a cut-off algorithm, depending on activity, season, wind speed and temperature. An understanding of why bats move around and/or hunt around wind turbines is, however, essential for understanding the mechanisms behind turbine mortality and might also lead to new mitigation measures.

The reasons that bats collide with rotor blades are still unclear. A series of laboratory studies by Long *et al.* (2010a, b) showed that ultrasonic echoes returned from moving SWT blades were imperfect, potentially increasing collision risk by lowering detection of moving blades. This may be why bats avoid SWTs. Horn *et al.* (2008) suggested that bats may be attracted towards turbines, but we do not know the underlying mechanisms behind these observations. We also do not know if bats can detect and therefore react to fast moving turbine blades.

The following aspects have to be studied for a better understanding of the problem:

- Hunting behaviour of bats,

- Insect density around wind turbines,
- Perception of wind turbine blades.

Research questions	Possible methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are bats hunting around the nacelle because of high insect densities? Are insect densities around turbines high in comparison to the wider landscape and, if so, why? Where do the insects come from (attraction from wider surroundings, wasteland from the ground area around the mast)? Is it possible to influence the insect density around the nacelle?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insect radar (see Chapmann <i>et al.</i> 2011), • Insect traps.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why do bats collide with turbines? ARNETT (2005) describes avoidance behaviour of several bats in front of the blades, while others did not show any avoidance behaviour. How do bats perceive the rotating blades with their echolocation system? Can they assess the speed? This knowledge could be used to find ways of making blades more noticeable to bats.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio tracking, • Behavioural studies with detectors and thermal imaging cameras, • Laboratory experiments, • Echolocation experiments with an artificial bat (see Long <i>et al.</i> 2010a,b), • Physiological and behavioural studies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are high flying bats attracted to wind turbines? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thermal imaging camera, • Automatic bat activity registration systems, • At ground level and high altitude.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic studies are needed on the behavioural responses of different species to construction, operational and removal phases of wind farms, based on life history traits, population dynamics, ecology and abundance. This will establish species-specific sensitivities to several types of large-scale wind farms and identify the influence of turbine lighting on bat behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio tracking, • Behavioural studies with detectors and thermal imaging cameras.

6.2 What are the best methods to assess likely impacts on bats from wind turbine construction during impact assessments and post construction monitoring (Methodology development)?

Methods need to be developed or adapted to be able to study:

- Bats at high altitudes,
- Species distributions on a broad level (pre-survey phase),
- New methods for acoustic monitoring at nacelle height, due to longer rotor blades,
- Wind farms in forests.

Research questions	Possible methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Quantifying collision rates of different bat species in different habitats / regions should be given a high priority. Systematic and</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic collision mortality studies throughout the whole season (methods after Arnett 2005, Grünkorn <i>et al.</i> 2005, Niermann <i>et</i>

<i>standardised studies are needed of bat mortality at large scale wind farms which are located in different risk zones i.e. on migration routes but also in forests and areas with high hedgerow densities.</i>	<i>al. 2011).</i>
For post-construction monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies on how large the search area for bat fatalities has to be to be able to make robust estimates? • Studies on possible species-specific removal rate of bats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic collision mortality studies throughout the whole season (methods after Arnett 2005, Niermann <i>et al.</i> 2007, 2011).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish adequate census methods for bat activity at different altitudes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thermal imaging camera, • Detector/multi microphone arrays, • Bat activity registration systems, • At ground level and high altitude.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish adequate census methods for bat activity above forests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detector/multi microphone arrays, • Masts for appropriate height, • Bat activity registration systems.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and test models of geographical and ecologically relevant species distribution maps. These highlight the most important foraging areas across a large geographical range; results would be displayed along a gradient from most important foraging area to least important (e.g., Jaberg & Guisan 2001, Santos <i>et al.</i> 2013). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIS and habitat suitability models, (e.g., Ecological Niche Factor Analysis).

6.3 How effective are the mitigation measures that are used today?

Further information is needed on the following questions:

- Is it acceptable to use the same cut-in-speed in different wind farms or does it need to be site and/or season specific?
- Wind turbines are designed to be operational for more than 20 years. Do changes in bat activity resulting from landscape or climatic change make it necessary to correct/update mitigation measures after a number of years?

Research questions	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is it important to determine site specific cut-in-speed algorithms?</i> • <i>Is it important to repeat post-construction monitoring after 10-15 years?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acoustic monitoring at nacelle height in combination with systematic collision mortality studies (methods after Arnett 2005, Grünkorn <i>et al.</i> 2005, Niermann <i>et al.</i> 2007, Brinkmann <i>et al.</i> 2011).

6.4 How large is the effect on populations, especially the cumulative effect of wind farms?

Further information is needed on:

- Which populations are involved (local or migrating bats),
- Whether mortality affects bats at the population level.

Research questions	Methods
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Potential population level impacts of bat collision mortality (which are completely unknown).</i>³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic collision mortality studies throughout the whole season (methods after Arnett 2005, Grünkorn <i>et al.</i> 2005, Niermann <i>et al.</i> 2011), • Genetic studies, • Population studies, • Population models.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent studies from Germany (Voigt <i>et al.</i> 2012) indicate that not only migrating bats, but also foraging bats from the local populations collide with turbines. How large is the percentage of migrating bats in relation to residential bats that are involved in bat fatalities at wind farms? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic studies from systematic collision studies;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, many wind farms are in operation without adequate mitigation measures (such as increased cut-in speed) in place. How large is the cumulative effect of single wind turbines and wind farms on a local, regional, national and international level? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic studies, • Isotope studies, • Population studies, • Population models.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term studies are required to determine long-term effects of wind farms. Such effects could, for example, include habituation of bats to wind farms, which could cause the impact to decrease over time. For migratory bats such phenomena are not expected but this could be possible for local bats. Significant impacts on the population only become apparent in the long-term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ringing, • Population studies, • Isotope studies.

6.5 In which habitats/landscapes wind turbines should not be allowed due to high collision rate?

Further information is needed on:

- Important foraging sites,
- Regional specific collision rates/problematic species,
- Where in space and when in time / season migration takes place,
- Whether flyways / migration zones exist and if so, whether these are recognisable,
- If so, what is their relation to landscape at different scales,
- Whether it is possible to use information on 'peak migration activity' and 'migration flyways in the landscape' to avoid problems.

Research questions	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The investigation of collision rates of bats (like Brinkmann <i>et al.</i> 2011) for southern Europe, preferably</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acoustic monitoring at nacelle height in combination with systematic collision mortality

³ The effects on the population level are unknown not only in regard to bat collision mortality as a result from wind farms, but also regarding mortality through bat collision with traffic or regarding reduced reproduction caused by disturbance of roosts etc. resulting from other types of development (there are a few studies cases of mortality induced by traffic for which it has been shown that those may be unsustainable for populations in the long term (e.g., Altringham 2008). This kind of research should be set up in a broader sense.

<i>one in south-western and another in south-eastern</i>	studies (methods after Arnett 2005, Grünkorn <i>et al.</i> 2005, Niermann <i>et al.</i> 2007, Brinkmann <i>et al.</i> 2011).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identifying habitats as important foraging sites for relevant bat species.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detector studies, • Habitat use modelling.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identifying migration routes/corridors on-shore and stepping stones. There are several studies on bat migration in different isolated places of Europe, but a continuous map of migration routes or stepping stones is not available.</i> • <i>Do landscape structures (river valleys, coastlines, valleys between mountain ridges, etc.) guide migration?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bat ringing projects along migration routes, • Constant effort mist netting along migration routes, • International genetic studies (see Petit & Mayer 2000), • Radio-tracking, • Radar studies, • Detector studies on selected migration points.

6.6 What is the behaviour of bats migrating over large water bodies, especially seas? In what numbers do they exhibit this behaviour?

Further information is needed on:

- Whether flyways / migration zones exist and are recognisable. If so, where locations of migration routes and hunting areas are, off-shore and near-shore.
- How can collision of bats with off-shore turbines be determined?

Research questions	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying migration routes/corridors off-shore and stepping stones. There are several studies on bat migration in different isolated places of Europe, but a continuous map of migration routes or stepping stones is not available. Although some studies and anecdotal observations do show that bats are crossing the open sea such as the North and Baltic Seas (Ahlén 1997, Russ <i>et al.</i> 2001, 2003, Walter <i>et al.</i> 2004, Sonntag <i>et al.</i> 2006, Ahlén <i>et al.</i> 2009, Hüppop 2009, Meyer 2011, Seebens <i>et al.</i> 2013), specific information on the exact off-shore migration paths is missing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bat ringing projects along migration routes, • Constant effort mist netting along migration routes (stepping stones), • International genetic studies (see Petit & Mayer 2000), • Radio-tracking, • Radar studies, • Detector studies on selected migration points.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there bat activity offshore and at what distances from the shore? Which species are active offshore and is it only during migration? Does the migration also involve foraging and is it related to movements towards islands? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detector studies from lighthouses, buoys, boat transect (hand held, automatic bat registration systems), • Thermal imaging, • Radar.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Under which weather conditions does migration takes place on-shore/on-land and off-shore? More data is needed on bat migration, more specifically site-specific information of migration routes and the numbers of bats that use them, species-specific flight altitudes,</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detector studies from the ground, towers, wind turbines, balloons, etc., • Thermal imaging camera studies, • Radar, • Physiological and behavioural studies.

<i>and how timing, routing and direction are influenced by weather conditions. How often do bats stop to rest or forage?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development and testing of methods to investigate bat activity at sea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio tracking, • Tracking radar, • Ringing⁴, • Broad-scale, repeated and synchronised bat detector samples, • Detector surveys on ferries and moored buoys.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and test methods to investigate bat activity and collision rates at off-shore wind farms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking radar, • Boat transects, ferry tours, • Automatic bat detector systems on buoys, rigs or other existing structures.

6.7 Small Wind Turbines (SWT)

Small Wind Turbines of different types are relatively new phenomena, but numbers are increasing and it is likely this will continue. Very little is known about the effects on bat behaviour/bat populations, but work to date suggests that bats avoid operational turbines and observed mortality is relatively low (Minderman *et al.* 2012, Park *et al.* 2013). Further research is needed on mortality and disturbance impacts of a wider range of species, habitats and turbine sizes/models.

Research questions	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How does collision risk vary between species, habitats and turbine size/model?</i> • <i>Does the avoidance of turbines by <i>Pipistrellus</i> spp. previously observed apply to different species and/or turbines of different sizes?</i> • <i>Do SWT's have a negative effect on species which are currently thought to be relatively unaffected by mid-size and large wind turbines?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acoustic monitoring in combination with systematic collision mortality studies (similar to Niermann <i>et al.</i> 2011) and/or behavioural studies; where possible, an experimental approach should be adopted (e.g. manipulation of turbine operation), • Thermal imaging.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are there any lethal- or sublethal effects when SWT are installed close to roosts?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acoustic monitoring in combination with roost counts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What mitigation measures would be effective in reducing mortality and/or disturbance?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental approach (before/after/control/impact) with manipulation of turbine operation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there potential for population level impacts from disturbance caused by SWT?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortality and disturbance studies in combination with population modelling. • Case studies to take advantage of situations where turbines may have been installed adjacent to roosts/foraging areas of rare or vulnerable species.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is the potential for cumulative impacts of SWT?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A searchable database of SWT installations is required at a county/country level.

⁴ See also the EUROBATs Resolutions No. 4.6 and 5.5: Guidelines for the Issue of Permits for the Capture and Study of Capture Wild Bats.

7 Content of national guidelines

The volume, content and specificity of national guidelines, recently assessed in 2014 by the EUROBATS Intersessional Working Group on Wind Turbines and Bat Populations, vary to a high extent. They range from a few general recommendations to very detailed, thick documents. Some of the national guidelines are consistent with the EUROBATS Guidelines (published as EUROBATS Publication Series No. 3) while others stand to a greater or lesser extent in contradiction with them. In order to ensure equally effective protection of bats within the whole range of the Agreement, it is important that all national guidelines fulfil certain minimum standards, which are in agreement with the resolutions of Parties and the best current scientific knowledge.

In line with paragraph 5 of Resolution 5.6, approved by Parties during the 5th Session of the Meeting of Parties (2006), Parties should "develop appropriate national guidelines, drawing on the current version of the generic guidelines in Annex 1". This Resolution was later amended during the 6th Session of the Meeting of Parties (2010). In line with paragraph 6 of Resolution 6.11, Parties are urged to: "develop and ensure implementation of national guidance appropriate to the local environment based on the principles in the EUROBATS Publication Series No. 3". 7MoP+++

A thorough examination of this provision, as well as other provisions of Resolution 6.11 leads to conclusions that:

1. Parties should develop national guidelines on the planning process and impact assessments of wind turbines on bats.
2. National guidelines should be based on the principles contained in the EUROBATS Publication Series No. 3, i.e. "Guidelines for consideration of bats in wind farm projects". 7MoP+++
3. Considering paragraph 4 of Resolution 6.11, it can be concluded that national guidelines should cover at least three issues:
 - a) surveys,
 - b) pre-construction impact assessments,
 - c) post-construction monitoring.
4. National guidelines should be specific to the local environment, i.e. they should adapt the general EUROBATS Guidelines to local conditions (both at a national and, if possible, at a regional or even lower level).
5. Parties should also ensure implementation of national guidelines, hence during work on national guidelines care should be taken to ensure that they are executable, i.e. in agreement with national regulations and administrative practices, and take into account manpower and equipment resources of the national bat conservation community. At the same time, Parties should place the guidelines in the national system of environmental impact assessments to ensure that they are observed.

Even if the above recommendations look prescriptive, each of them is open to a range of interpretations. For this reason, below we analyse these points in detail, suggesting the minimum requirements for national guidelines and areas in which a range of national solutions are possible.

7.1 Developing national guidelines

Resolution 6.11 clearly indicates that Parties are obliged to develop national or regional guidelines concerning the planning process and impact assessments of wind turbines on bats. Range states that are not Parties to the Agreement are not obliged to observe the provisions of this Resolution, however, they are encouraged and advised to implement this Resolution for the conservation of European bat populations.

The Resolution does not specify the form of guidelines and it is recognised that various solutions are acceptable, depending on the preferences of a given state. Guidelines on wind farms may appear in a solely document concerning the issue of wind farms and bats (a solution that is applied most frequently), as a chapter in general guidelines for assessment of wind farm impact on the environment, or as a chapter on wind farms in general guidelines for assessing the impact of various development projects on bats.

It is also acceptable to develop separate guidelines for different elements of the process (such as pre-construction surveys, analysis of available data and research results, post-construction

monitoring) and wind farm types (on-shore, off-shore, single turbines, small turbines, etc.). However, these individual guidelines should be consistent with one another and not lead to the unjustified reduction of assessment quality for one type of wind farm. As a rule, it should be ensured that, in line with paragraph 4 of Resolution 6.11, all wind farms that can have an impact on bats should be accompanied by pre-construction impact assessments (including adequate surveys) and post-construction monitoring, according to the same standardised practices. The number of bats killed by a turbine does not depend on whether it is a single device or whether it is in a group of turbines (Rydell *et al.* 2010a). Consequently, the cumulative effect of several single wind turbines can equal the impact of a large wind farm and hence it should require adequate research and assessments.

7.2 Compliance of national guidelines with EUROBATS Guidelines

Parties should choose the appropriate authority/organisation to develop national guidelines. Typically, they are developed by specialised non-governmental organisations, but they can also be created by research institutions, nature conservation administrative units or even individual experts. However, because implementation of the provisions of the Resolution and nature conservation on the national scale is the duty of competent state authorities of a given Party, these authorities should ensure that the applied guidelines are in agreement with the current knowledge and the general EUROBATS Guidelines. Application of guidelines that do not fulfil these requirements should not be accepted.

The EUROBATS Guidelines contain both specific and general recommendations. National guidelines can, but do not have to, repeat specific recommendations. They can suffice in stating that the specific recommendations set in the EUROBATS Guidelines should be applied.

If the EUROBATS recommendations are too general, national guidelines should make them more specific. National guidelines can also regulate issues not mentioned in EUROBATS Guidelines.

Small deviations from EUROBATS recommendations are acceptable if they are based on:

- a) special national conditions – e.g. climate or species composition (for example, it is not necessary to carry out acoustic detection studies in March in states in which March temperatures are below zero, or to search for wintering sites in states with a warmer climate in which bats do not hibernate);
- b) current knowledge – in order to incorporate important new methods, widely accepted by bat researchers, which improve the effectiveness of research and impact assessments or mitigating measures, but are not yet included in the current version of EUROBATS Guidelines.

It should be noted that in line with Resolution 6.11, the EUROBATS Advisory Committee should keep the generic guidelines updated, taking into consideration advances in knowledge. This means that national guidelines should also be regularly updated, to keep them consistent with the most recent version of the EUROBATS recommendations and the current state of knowledge. A fixed frequency of updates of national guidelines can be adopted (e.g., every four years), however, it appears more effective to update them as necessary, but at least following each update of EUROBATS Guidelines. This means that guidelines should always contain the date of the last update or version number, which allows the user to identify the most current version.

7.3 The content of national guidelines

Resolution 6.11 points out that national or regional guidelines should cover at least pre-construction impact assessments, including surveys, and post-construction monitoring. Specific content of these guidelines, however, is determined mainly by their purpose. **National or regional guidelines should complement the general EUROBATS Guidelines, to ensure that assessment of wind farm impact on bats takes into account specific conditions in a given state (or region).** These conditions include mainly:

- a) climatic conditions (those that affect the timing of the bat activity season),
- b) natural conditions (land relief, types of habitats and their significance for bats),
- c) characteristics of bat fauna (species, their distribution and abundance, population sizes, threats, vulnerability to collisions with wind farms, times and routes of migration, etc.),
- d) position of research and analyses in the national procedures of impact assessment (e.g., differences in research scope for the purposes of SEA, EIA and impact assessment on Natura 2000 sites; specific requirements concerning research and reports required by national regulations).

Taking into account that bats migrate over several countries, their conservation requires a transboundary approach. Therefore, national guidelines should not be in contradiction to these guidelines. However, they can affect the choice of research methods (from among methods of similar effectiveness) and arrangement of reports, or create differences between requirements on data specificity on various stages of issuing a permission for construction of a wind farm in a given location. The scope of research and analyses can usually be more general at a strategic planning level and gradually more specific in the successive stages of the permission-issuing process, with the complete impact assessment analysis finished before a final decision to allow a wind farm construction is issued.

Natural characteristics (points a-c) can lead to small deviations from EUROBATS Guidelines, e.g., in order to better adapt research to bat activity and fauna in a given state. These modifications should, however, be based only on informed decisions and justified in the guidelines.

- A. Minimum requirements concerning the scope and methods of surveys (pre- and post-construction) are set in EUROBATS Guidelines. National guidelines can also include recommendations e.g., concerning additional data sources, the applied equipment (in order to ensure comparability of results between countries or regions), method of choosing transects or detection points, requirements on the spatial representativeness of a study, limits of bat activity periods or requirements on the qualifications of persons or companies carrying out fieldwork and data analysis. It is recommended that they also specify (standardise) the scope of data that has to be submitted to the authority conducting an impact assessment, as well as method of their presentation (e.g., type of map attachments or format of output data attached to the report) and storage (if this is not specified in other national regulations). National guidelines can differentiate recommendations for research by specific habitat types occurring in a given state. They can also suggest additional research, which is beyond the minimal scope set by EUROBATS Guidelines – obligatory, recommended or accepted in a given state.
- B. Recommendations concerning pre-construction impact assessments should be specified in national regulations concerning assessment of impact on the environment, and in the case of Parties which are members of the European Union – also be compliant with EU legislation. It is crucial that national guidelines include the following:
 - 1) minimum requirements on wind farm siting with regard to bats, to ensure clarity about which proposed wind farms are unacceptable (this can be decided on the basis of EUROBATS Guidelines, but national guidelines can also include additional recommendations, associated with specific local conditions - in line with paragraph 2 of Resolution 6.11);
 - 2) an indication in which cases it is necessary to conduct an assessment of impact on a Natura 2000 site or other area or object of nature protection created for the purpose of bat protection;
 - 3) types of recommended mitigating measures and principles of their application, with special consideration of the principles concerning the use of seasonal or temporal blade feathering and increase of cut-in wind speeds, in line with paragraph 6 of Resolution 6.11.
- C. National regulations regarding post-construction monitoring should consider the fact that, due to the possible changes in behaviour by bats associated with the construction of the wind farm, each wind farm requires post-construction monitoring. These requirements should indicate how results concerning the observed level of bat mortality and activity in the vicinity of rotors should translate into changes of recommendations for wind turbine operation (including both using more or less strict mitigating measures, or abandoning them if they are unnecessary). They should also specify that if it is not possible to decrease the mortality using mitigating measures, it is necessary to completely stop operation of wind turbines (at least during the period of bat activity). If application of mitigating measures is changed, national guidelines should specify the time and scope of further post-construction monitoring. National guidelines should also ensure that the results of post-construction monitoring are sent to appropriate authorities responsible for nature conservation and can be used by specialists for collective analyses and improvement of national and EUROBATS guidelines.

The above recommendations concerning the content of national guidelines do not form a closed list. These guidelines can also include other components, depending on the requirements of a particular state. Examples of such additional components are glossaries of terms used, lists of

additional literature sources, list of organisations that can provide advice, and description of administrative procedures.

7.4 Adapting guidelines to local conditions

Currently, in most cases national guidelines cover the whole country (a Party or non-party Range State). However, there are cases (especially in the larger states) when different guidelines are adopted for different regions or administrative units. This is acceptable as long as differences between the regional guidelines are justified by local conditions (such as climate, land relief or bat fauna). Authorities responsible for observing EUROBATS Guidelines and bat conservation should ensure that all guidelines are as consistent between regions as possible. It is recommended that uniform, frame guidelines are set for the whole country, which caters for the local conditions in various regions (e.g. uniform research methods but regional differences in times of data collection or data interpretation).

In the case of states with similar natural conditions (e.g. small neighbouring countries) it is acceptable that uniform guidelines are adopted for a whole group of states. However, this should be unanimously approved by appropriate authorities of all the states in question. In other cases, in principle it is not accepted that guidelines developed for one state are applied also in a different state, especially if this leads to limiting the scope of research or adopting reduced criteria during interpretation of results. The only cases in which guidelines created in a different state can be applied, are the following:

- a) if in the state for which an assessment is made, national guidelines have not yet been developed and adopted (in this case guidelines for the most similar state in terms of natural conditions and bat fauna can be applied);
- b) to widen the scope of research relative to national guidelines, for scientific or comparative purposes, or e.g. near the national border, to do a cross-border impact assessment.

7.5 Ensuring implementation of guidelines

Implementation of national guidelines should be ensured by Parties. This can be done in two basic ways:

- a) incorporation of the obligation to observe guidelines into national legislation;
- b) incorporation of the guidelines in the process of authorization of each project.

Besides this, it is essential to adopt consistent practices for evaluation of environmental impact assessment reports, in order to ensure that only the reports that comply with national guidelines are approved (studies with additional, broader scope or stricter interpretation of results can also be accepted).

With regard to EU member (or candidate) states, it should be emphasized that consistent application of the most recent national guidelines is also compliant with article 5, paragraph 1b of *Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of The Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment* and with article 5, paragraph 2 of *Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2001/42/EC of June 27 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*. According to these regulations, the scope of required information (for the purposes of EIA or SEA) should be consistent with the current state of knowledge and methods of assessment. National guidelines should specify the methods of assessment that are consistent with the current state of knowledge.

It is unacceptable if, when national guidelines are in place (are recommended officially by relevant administration authorities or non-officially by NGOs), projects are accepted for which no impact assessment was conducted, or it was conducted using different, independent methods, that are not in accordance with the guidelines, are reduced or require significantly less research (and yield less data to base a decision on) than the methods set in the national guidelines.

8 Conclusions and further work

This document sets out generic guidelines for the planning process and impact assessments to take account of the effect of wind turbines on bats. Additionally it summarizes relevant research priorities. It is by no means complete and requires further development particularly within the European context.

The current impact of wind farms on bats should be investigated further in order to find solutions to minimise the impacts of future wind farm developments.

9 References / further reading

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10 Glossary

- Automated bat detectors** – bat calls recording system that can be left unattended in the field.
- Avoidance** – action taken to avoid an environmental impact such as habitat loss, animal mortality or injury.
- Commuting** – flight of a bat between a roost and a feeding area, or between two feeding areas.
- Compensation** – action awarded to the ecosystem in recognition of environmental impact such as habitat loss, animal mortality or injury.
- Conflict analyses** – the search and assess of conflicts
- Cumulative effect** – combined effect on the environment caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other past, present and reasonable foreseeable developments and other human activities.
- Cut-in wind speed** – the wind speed at which a turbine begins to generate electrical power. It could also be the wind speed at which a wind turbine begins to rotate if a system exist that enables free turbine rotation at lower wind speed. It is model specific but generally between 2.5-4m/s. Larger more modern turbines can be programmed very precisely to cut-in at higher wind speeds.
- Distance from wind turbine** – the shortest straight line distance between a given point or line and the horizontal circle with a centre at the wind turbine tower axis and a radius equal to the turbine blade length (approximate value).
- Environmental impact assessment (EIA)** – a national procedure for evaluating the likely environmental effects of those public and private projects which may have significant effects on the environment (see for instance Council Directive 85/337/EEC)
- Feathering** – Adjusting the angle of the rotor blade parallel to the wind, or turning the whole unit out of the wind, to slow or stop blade rotation. The rotor is not fixed even during shutdown, but is permitted to spin freely at very low speed.
- Habitats Directive** – Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora
- Index of bat activity** – a numerical value given in activity units (e.g. passes) per hour, determined for each survey at each listening point or functional transect section (as well as for the whole farm or its selected part), calculated separately for individual species or species groups (and for all bats); the term “mean bat activity index” can additionally be used, meaning a numerical value given in activity units per hour, determined for a selected period – e.g. for autumn migrations or the whole year – and calculated as the arithmetic mean of indexes recorded in a given period or otherwise, in accordance with the applicable methodology.
- Manual detectors** – bat calls detecting system allowing an operator to “hear”, record or identify bats in the field.
- Migration** – regular, usually seasonal, movement of all or part of an animal population to and from a given area.

Mitigation – action taken to mitigate, reduce or minimize an environmental impact such as habitat loss, animal fatality or injury.

Offshore wind turbines – wind turbines built in bodies of water

Onshore wind turbines – wind turbines built on land

Precautionary principle – where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation (United Nations – Rio declaration on environment and development 1992).

Repowering – this is when wind farm is re-powered. This can either be fitting more efficient generator to existing turbines, fitting new more efficient blade to existing turbines or replacing existing turbines with newer more efficient turbines. As technology has improved there is a general trend to replace older smaller turbines with fewer more efficient larger turbines.

Scoping – the early and very important step in an assessment of environmental impact, which usually follows screening – the process of determining the content and extent of matters that should be covered in the environmental information to be submitted to a competent authority for projects or plans which are subject to EIA or SEA (usually scoping is used to identify at least: important issues to be covered in an assessment, the appropriate time and space boundaries of study, information necessary for decision-making, significant effects and factors to be studied in details, and sometimes also feasible alternatives to the proposed projects or plans, which should be reviewed).

Screening – the process of determination of whether or not an EIA is needed (usually it is based on country and/or EU legislation) – in the case of wind turbines it should take into consideration point 5 of the EUROBATS resolution 7.5, which requires the Parties to the Agreement to assess the impact of all planned wind turbines on bats.

Small Wind Turbines – there is no globally accepted definition of “small wind” but the upper limit of individual countries’ definitions typically range from 15-100kW generational capacity (World Wind Energy Association 2013). A distinction is sometimes made between micro-wind (0-1.5kW), small (1.5-50kW) and medium wind (50-100kW) turbines (Renewables UK 2012).

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) – procedure for integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development (see for instance Directive 2001/42/EC)

Swarming – the flights of bats through and around potential and active roosts in late summer and early fall and also at dawn in front of maternity roosts for some species

Transboundary impact – any impact caused by an activity situated in one country, and with effect within the area under the jurisdiction of another country or countries

Wind farm infrastructure – they include access roads , sub stations and the Grid connection cables, which may be over ground or underground and may even include separate meteorological masts on larger wind farms to allow accurate monitoring of performance.

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Annex 1 - Studies done in Europe

Annex 2 - Bat mortality

Annex 3 - Maximum foraging distances and height of flight

Annex 4 - Detectability coefficients to compare activity indices