

7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brussels, Belgium, 15 – 17 September 2014

Secretariat Report



Staff

After completion of the re-classification process in January 2013, both posts of Administrative Assistants (GS-6 50% part-time) had been advertised and re-recruited. As of 1 September 2013 Tine Meyer-Cords has been confirmed on her post and promoted to the GS-6 Level and as of 1 October 2013 Ana Thiel has entered on duty as a new Administrative Assistant.

The advertisement and recruitment for the new post of Associate Scientific and Project Officer (P-2, 50% part-time) has been very lengthy but was eventually completed. As of 1 March 2014 Dr. Suren Gazaryan has entered on duty for this post.

Agreement Membership

Since the 6th Session of the Meeting of Parties Montenegro, Cyprus and Switzerland have acceded to the Agreement, bringing the total number of Parties to 35. Israel has informed that the accession is an advanced stage. The Secretariat continues to receive indications from a number of additional states preparing the accession to the Agreement.

Publicity

The various volumes of the EUROBATS Publication Series continue to be highly demanded and reprints will become necessary in 2014.

The joint CMS Family internet platform that the Secretariats have started to plan and develop in 2012 was launched in March 2014 (www.migratoryspecies.org).

This joint platform will not only demonstrate the close links between CMS and the related Agreements but also link all relevant information and documents for focal points. It will not replace the existing individual websites but become a joint portal to the CMS Family as a whole.

The International Bat Night continues to be successful and growing every year again all over the Agreement area. Reports of events are available on the EUROBATS website.

Year of the Bat 2011 – 2012

The “Year of the Bat” campaign has clearly dominated the Secretariat’s work in 2011-2012.

It was initially envisaged that during 2011, EUROBATS would take the lead and using its established base in Europe, take the Campaign to a strong and healthy start. CMS was set to take over the second year when the Campaign was intended to go global. Unexpectedly, the initial response to the declaration of the YoB initiative was global. It became inevitably clear that from day one (i.e. 2011) the Campaign would be a global rather than regional, initiative.

The first year of the Campaign was highly focused on the need to raise global awareness of the initiative and establish links and contacts within various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), bat and or nature conservation groups and museums. This was done through three main platforms, which are: the Year of the Bat website, EUROBATS contacts and Focal Points (FP), electronic newsletter and lastly, through the use of Web 2.0 tools in particular, Facebook. After a starting base of a pool of enthusiastic contacts were made, attention was shifted to the greater audience – the general public. With the launch of a Campaign website and the initial push by EUROBATS Focal Points and NGOs, YoB was “online”. The website featured key information on bats and the initiative and importantly, provided a form through which interested individuals could get in touch. The idea of networking was set on establishing Campaign “Partners”. There were 25 European, 6 North American, 9 South American, 8 Asian and 1 African Partners of YoB.

It would be a justified statement to make that the campaign has thus far, been an unprecedented success in the area of awareness raising for bats. From the simple form on a website and an established EUROBATS contact list, the campaign has attained voice and light globally. The scope of the campaign also is a measure of its achievement as it is not one where only bat experts, conservation groups and enthusiasts are involved, but a Campaign that has reached classrooms, girl and boy scouts, university lecture halls, children’s magazines, print and digital newspapers, books, radio and television. If such a presence was not a sufficient measure of the successful spread, the sheer amount of printed promotional material that has been shifted and sent out, speaks volumes. As far as an awareness raising campaign goes, good work has been done and established.

EUROBATS Advisory Committee Workspace

The EUROBATS Advisory Committee Workspace (<http://workspace.eurobats.org>) became operational in January 2013 and is the electronic, web-based communication space and working area for the EUROBATS Advisory Committee (AC). Its aim is to provide a central platform for online collaboration and support the work and the communication of the Advisory Committee between meetings. The platform consists of a public and a restricted area, the latter accessible only to the current members and other experts of the EUROBATS Advisory Committee and the administrative focal points of Parties. The user statistics show that the Workspace is not yet being used at its full potential.

Special Projects

In 2011-2014 the Secretariat was able to finance and co-ordinate the following projects through EPI funding:

- Evaluation of riparian forests as guidelines and feeding areas in bat migration (Germany/Austria);
- The Conservation of vulnerable floodplain forests with the help of Pond Bat and Barbastelle (Hungary);
- Bats of Albania – from field work and monography to conservation and education (Albania);
- Bats of Bou Hedma National Park: Habitat use and conservation (Tunisia).
- The conservation of vulnerable floodplain forests in the Hungarian Lower-Danube-valley, with pond bats and barbastelles as indicators (Hungary, Serbia, Croatia and Romania);
- Exploring the feeding and roosting habits of *Pipistrellus hanaki* in Crete, Greece;
- Capacity-building for bat species monitoring in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria (Jordan);
- First Tabachka Bat Workshop (Bulgaria);
- Workshop on bat research and bat conservation in Belarus – print of an information leaflet on bat conservation in Belarus;
- Baseline Survey and Monitoring of bats in Lebanon;
- Capacity Building for identification of bat species and the monitoring of bat species in FYR Macedonia;

- Investigation of the biology and occurrence of the Greater Noctule (*Nyctalus lasiopterus*) in forests in the Ukraine;
- Winter Census of bat occurrence in caves in Moldova;
- Awareness raising and education about bat biology and bat conservation in the region of Kharkov (Ukraine);
- Developing Monitoring Programmes and Analysing Trends in Bats Populations in the Dinarics – capacity building workshop, Skradin (Croatia);
- Trans-border collaboration in bat migration research in Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. The pilot project (Ukraine);
- Free-of-charge dissemination of scientific knowledge to European bat specialists through the World Bat Library (Geneva) and the EUROBATS network;
- Capacity Building for bat species monitoring in Northwest Africa (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia).

These projects become possible thanks to voluntary contributions from Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

In addition to the projects the Secretariat has supported the 3rd Berlin Bat Meeting.

A number of very promising project applications have been reviewed by the EPI Project Assessment Working Group.

Joint EU-EUROBATS Species Action Plan on Bats

In 2013 the development of a joint Species Action Plan on Bats has started between the European Commission and EUROBATS. An expert workshop to review the first draft has taken place on 18 November. After further consultations among the experts and consultation with EU member states, the SAP is expected to be adopted by the EU Habitats Committee in the near future.

Cooperation with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

Also in 2013 the development of a joint project between IRENA and the CMS Family on “Renewable Energy Technologies Deployment and Migratory Species” has started. Due to the high relevance of wind energy and partly also hydropower, EUROBATS will be actively participating in this project.

CMS Family Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023

For the first time a Strategic Plan for Migratory Species for the entire CMS Family is under preparation and to be adopted at the 11th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to CMS in November 2014.