

9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Draft Resolution 9.7: Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan



The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter "the Agreement"),

Referring to the commitments by the Parties to the conservation of bats in accordance with the Agreement, especially the fundamental obligations placed upon the Parties in Article III;

Recognising the value to the conservation of bats of the Action Plan for 2019 – 2022, established by Resolution 8.11 on the Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan, and agreed at the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties;

Noting the efforts of the Parties, as outlined in their National Implementation Reports, and of the Advisory Committee as well as the Secretariat to the Agreement to carry out the above plans and the progress achieved;

Noting the obligations for the Parties identified in the EUROBATS *Guide to the Implementation of the Agreement*;

Recognising the continuous need to prioritise actions;

Acknowledging the work being carried out in the framework of the EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EC), in particular the establishment of the Natura 2000 Network, and in the framework of the Bern Convention, in particular the establishment of the Emerald Network;

Decides to establish the Action Plan for 2023 – 2026 as appended at Annex 1 and notes that this Action Plan supersedes the Action Plan made under Resolution 8.11 at the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Annex 1 to Resolution 9.7

PRIORITIES FOR BAT CONSERVATION FOR THE PERIOD 2023 – 2026

The Parties to the Agreement should consider taking forward the following actions to enhance the conservation status of bats. The Secretariat shall prepare a plan of action based on the implementation priorities identified by the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee shall review the success that each Party or Range State has in achieving each goal and will seek to disseminate examples of good practice between the Parties and the Range States.

1. Legal Requirements

With reference to Inf.EUROBATS.MoP2.14fin, Resolution No. 8, Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan, Annex A, 1:

- The Parties should continue to take measures to fully implement Article III (1) of the Agreement. Section 3 of the EUROBATS Guide to Implementation (Hutson, Marnell & Petermann, 2019) provides help and guidance on this.

2. Population Survey and Monitoring

(a) With reference to Resolution 8.10:

- The Parties should ensure that experts/groups of experts carrying out assessment of projects, plans, and programmes on populations of European bats meet the minimum standard of skills, knowledge, and experience as described in the Annex to Resolution 8.10.

(b) With reference to Resolution 9.5:

- The Parties should develop a checklist for the authorities which enables the authorities to examine the assessment reports at hand in terms of completeness and soundness;
- The Parties should use the annex to Resolution 9.5 as a template to develop a checklist to support their authorities dealing with bat assessment reports.

(c) With reference to Resolution 2.2 and EUROBATS Publication Series No. 5 on Monitoring of Bats:

- The Parties should collate and provide all bat populations monitoring data with special reference to species prioritised by the Range States and review the methods used and the species covered;

- The Parties should share information on experience gained in using the methods outlined in the published Guidelines, with the intention of keeping those up-to-date and building a comprehensive dataset to be reviewed in detail in due course;
- The Advisory Committee should promote the use of standardised monitoring methods as well as review and update the monitoring guidelines with the new technological and methodological advances;
- The Advisory Committee should work towards the development of standardised pan-European monitoring and capacity building for monitoring. The importance of long-term monitoring at a pan-European level to build up good datasets on species distribution and population trends should be recognised and emphasised;
- The Advisory Committee should establish an online database of monitoring activities and results throughout the Agreement area.

(d) With reference to Resolution 4.9:

- the Parties should adopt consistent monitoring methods in either national or regional specific bat monitoring programmes across Europe, emphasizing the importance of long-term monitoring programmes, to build up good datasets on species distribution and population trends;

(e) With reference to Resolution 5.4:

- The Advisory Committee should support the development of appropriate data storage platform and analysis mechanisms to facilitate the production of Europe-wide trends for bat species.

(f) With reference to Resolution 8.3:

- The Parties should prioritize studies to identify areas for breeding and hibernation, migration routes, stopover sites and population parameters (population sizes and trends) with the use of classical and novel methods, such as banding, radio-tagging, acoustic, genetic and isotope analyses;
- The Parties should stimulate cross-boundary efforts in research and conservation of migratory species;
- The Parties should report results of studies in behaviour and population sizes of migratory bats, including references to published articles;
- The Parties should increase the cooperation with bird banding centres;

- The Advisory Committee should collate information on the above-mentioned research topics.
- (g) With reference to Resolution 9.3:
- The Secretariat, with advice from the Advisory Committee, should encourage projects on the Priority Species listed in the Annex and seek for external funding as appropriate;
 - The Advisory Committee should update the Annex to Resolution 9.3 as required.
- (h) With reference to Resolution 7.7 on Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management:
- The Parties should develop their own national guidance appropriate to their bat communities, forest ecosystems and forest management practices based on the principles in the EUROBATS Bats and Forestry leaflet;
 - The Parties should share best practice forestry guidance via the EUROBATS website.
- (i) With reference to Resolution 9.4 on the impacts of wind turbines on bat populations:
- The Parties should develop and ensure implementation of national guidance following the most recent version of the EUROBATS Advisory Committee generic guidelines and encourage research and monitoring on the impacts of wind turbines on bat populations;
 - The Parties should exclude wind energy developments from areas with a special focus on bat protection;
 - The Parties should encourage all stakeholders to engage in research and continued dialogue on the best methods for monitoring, impact assessment and mitigating bat mortality at onshore and offshore turbines for mutual benefit;
 - The Parties should ensure that appropriate impact assessments, post-construction monitoring, and mitigation measures are implemented for repowering proposals, as well as for entirely new developments, and that raw data from impact assessment and post-construction monitoring are made available for independent analysis;
 - The Parties should encourage developers of wind energy projects and responsible authorities to make reports from impact assessments and post-construction monitoring publicly available;
 - The Parties should encourage stakeholders to reconsider the operation scheme of existing wind turbines when they were commissioned without proper impact assessments and post-construction monitoring;

- The Advisory Committee should continue to compile relevant information, including methods to assess the impact of wind power generation on bat populations;
- The Advisory Committee should update the generic guidelines, now available as EUROBATS Publication Series No. 6, if required;
- The Secretariat should contact the World Bank, as a fellow organisation of the United Nations, to develop strategies for ensuring that funding for wind energy developments is contingent on the adoption of these resolutions.

(j) With reference to the progress made on Resolution 6.13 and the publication of a prototype indicator of trends in European bat populations at hibernation sites (EEA Technical Report 19/2013):

- The Advisory Committee should continue to expand and update this prototype to incorporate data for further countries and species and other technical improvements to assist the development of bats as indicators of ecosystem health;
- The Parties shall promote and support the development of bats as indicators more widely.

(k) With reference to Resolutions No. 7.10 and 8.8:

- The Parties should set up networks of animal rehabilitation centres and exchange the data on bats for scientific purposes;
- The Advisory Committee should finalise the draft Guidelines for Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation;
- The Parties should develop and implement national guidance following EUROBATS Advisory Committee generic guidelines on Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation.

3. Roosts

(a) With reference to Resolution 8.12:

- The Secretariat should publish the review document;
- The Parties should consider examples provided by the review document, developed by the Advisory Committee, whenever new roosting structures are planned, or existing structures are renovated for bats;
- The Parties should monitor existing purpose-built bat roosts and promote further studies on their effectiveness;

- The Advisory Committee should continue to gather information on the design of artificial, purpose-built bat roosts and keep the review document updated if required.
- (b) With reference to Resolution 7.6:
- The Parties and Non Party Range States should continue to collate and update information on important underground sites with a view to submitting this to the Secretariat every 8 years, using the revised guidance on site selection [Doc.Eurobats.MoP7.22];
 - The Parties should ensure that the important underground habitats they have identified are fully protected by law and, where appropriate, are physically protected against unauthorised entry.
- (c) With reference to Resolutions 5.7 and 8.5:
- The Parties should submit information on their most important overground roosts considering the guidance on site selection developed by the Advisory Committee and using the national databases according to an 8-year cycle;
 - The Secretariat should provide a standardised electronic form for the Parties to submit this information;
 - The Secretariat should record and follow up cases of loss or damage to listed sites that are brought to its attention, initially by correspondence with the Party or non-Party range States involved. Such cases should be reported by the Secretariat at each MoP.
- (d) With reference to Resolution 8.9:
- The Parties should develop and ensure implementation of national guidance following the generic guidelines developed by the Advisory Committee;
 - The Parties should include bats in the impact assessment of insulation programs at a strategic level;
 - The Parties should ensure that insulation projects are undertaken in compliance with national legislation regarding bat protection and conservation by implementing appropriate pre-insulation survey and assessment, mitigation and compensation to avoid roost loss and bat mortality.

4. Habitats

(a) With reference to Resolution 7.8:

- The Parties should develop appropriate national guidelines drawing on EUROBATS Publication No. 9 (Conservation and Management of critical Feeding Areas, Core Areas around Colonies and Commuting Routes) and ensure their implementation.

(b) With reference to Resolution 7.9:

- The Advisory Committee should finalise and publish guidelines highlighting the effects of roads and other infrastructure on bats and providing advice on how to minimise their impact;
- The Parties should develop appropriate national guidelines drawing on these generic guidelines when available.

(c) With reference to Resolution 8.6:

- The Parties should develop and promote implementation of national guidance taking due account of the EUROBATS Publication Series No. 8 on Bats and Light Pollution;
- The Advisory Committee should continue to compile relevant information, including efficacy of mitigation measures and methods to assess the impact of artificial light on individual bats and bat populations;
- The Advisory Committee should update the generic guidelines, if necessary.

5. Promoting Public Awareness of Bats and their Conservation and Providing Advice

(a) With reference to Inf.EUROBATS.MoP2.14fin, Annex A, 19:

- The Parties should continue to promote International Bat Night and continue efforts to raise public awareness and improve education in relation to bats;
- The Advisory Committee should continue to develop guidelines and training material for education programmes.

(b) With reference to Resolution 8.13:

- The Parties should promote awareness of the multiple ecological services provided by bats, especially for the agricultural sector, and raise awareness regarding the concerns mentioned above with land managers and other stakeholders.

6. Insect declines

(a) With reference to Resolution 8.13:

- The Parties should encourage and support scientific research on the impact of the insect decline on bat populations;
- The Parties should avoid the use of pesticides, particularly those problematic for bats and their food resources, in and around important areas for bat conservation;
- The Parties should ensure that bats are being considered in pesticide risk assessments;
- The Advisory Committee should collate relevant information on insect decline to help establish its causes, assess its potential effects on bat populations in Europe;
- The Advisory Committee should consider developing guidelines or recommendations for the most urgent or prioritised actions identified.

7. International co-operation

(a) With reference to Resolutions 7.10, 7.12, 8.3, 8.7:

- The Parties and non-Party Range States should work co-operatively towards increasing bat expertise and knowledge in their countries and internationally, particularly with the aim of implementing the recommendations of above-mentioned Resolutions.

(b) With reference to Resolution 6.10:

- The Secretariat and, if appropriate Parties and non-Party Range States, shall raise awareness for the potential synergies of the Agreement and other European treaties for nature conservation.
- The Secretariat should support further exchange and cooperation between bodies of the Agreement and those of other international treaties for nature conservation, in particular the Advisory Committee and the European Commission.

8. Diseases

(a) With reference to Resolution 5.2 and Resolution 6.6:

- The Advisory Committee should continue to monitor the occurrence of emerging diseases and advise the Parties on appropriate action;

- The Parties are encouraged to ensure that up to date information on emerging diseases is readily available;
- The Parties are encouraged to continue or introduce surveillance for rabies and other lethal infections.

(b) With reference to Resolution 9.6:

- The Advisory Committee should monitor and react to the erroneous coverage of zoonotic diseases in scientific publications and associated commentaries as well as in the media so far as bats are concerned.
- The Secretariat should make the response of the Advisory Committee to such publications available on its website.

9. EUROBATS Projects Initiative (EPI)

With reference to Resolution 6.4 and Resolution 7.15:

- The Advisory Committee should continue to implement the EPI;
- The Advisory Committee should ensure that funds allocated by the EUROBATS budget support projects that will provide wider benefits for EUROBATS range states;
- The Parties are encouraged to continue to support the EPI through voluntary contributions.

10. Climate change

With reference to Resolution 8.7:

- The Parties should cooperate on assessments of bat vulnerability to climate change at the EUROBATS range level;
- The Parties should monitor changes in species migration, hibernation, reproductive and range-shift patterns and consequent species interactions;
- The Advisory Committee should collate relevant scientific evidence of climate change's influence on bats and, if appropriate, develop guidelines for the most urgent actions identified;
- The Advisory Committee should identify knowledge gaps and research priorities relating to the impacts of climate change on bats.