

AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF POPULATIONS OF EUROPEAN BATS

National Implementation Report

ALBANIA

June 2014

A. General Information

Name of Party : Republic of Albania

Date of Report : June 2014

Period covered : January 2010 - June 2014

Competent Authority : Biodiversity Directorate / General Directorate of Policies
Ministry of Environment
Rruga e Durresit, no.27, Tirana - Albania

Appointed member of the Advisory Committee:

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B Status of Bats Within the Territory of the Party

1. Summary Details of Resident Species

32 species of bats have been identified until now in Albania. The following species have been added in this report, in comparison of the previous report (Bego F. 2010) :

Plecotus kolombatovici (Théou P., Bego F. 2013)

Pipistrellus pygmaeus (Schieffler, V.I., Bego, F., Théou, P., Podany, M., Pospischil, R., Hubner, S., 2013)

Nyctalus lasiopterus (Schieffler & Podany, *not published*)

All the others species have been identified by Konrad Sachanowicz and his team before and during the implementation of a Eurobats funded project. No data have been published or shared with national authorities during the

project, or after the end of this one. The only accessible data can be found here : http://www.eurobats.org/summaries_of_conducted_projects

Barbastella barbastellus, *Myotis alcathoe*, *Rhinolopus mehelyi*, *Plecotus macrobullaris*, *Myotis alcathoe*, *Myotis brandtii* and *Myotis nattereri*

2. Status and Trends

As the result of the monitoring work as well as other studies in the state of bat species by the National Environmental Agency conclusions are drawn for the general state and trends of bats species.

According to legal provisions of the Law “On biodiversity” no. 9587 of 20.7.2006 the Red Book of the Albanian Fauna should be updated every 5 years. The last update took place in 2013 and the list of Protected Fauna Species in Albania was approved by the Order of the Minister of Environment, no. 1280, dated 20.11.2013 “On the approval of the Red List of Albanian fauna and flora”. Actually there are 16 bat species included in this list.

Name of the Species	Albanian Red List (2013)		Name of the Species	Albanian Red List (2013)
<i>Rhinolopus blasii</i>	Yes (LRnt)		<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Rhinolopus euryale</i>	Yes (VU)		<i>Nyctalus lasiopterus</i>	No
<i>Rhinolopus ferrumequinum</i>	Yes (LRcd)		<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Rhinolopus hipposideros</i>	Yes (LRnt)		<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Rhinolopus mehelyi</i>	No		<i>Pipistrellus kuhli</i>	No
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	No		<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	No
<i>Miniopterus schreibersi</i>	Yes (LRnt)		<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	No
<i>Myotis alcathoe</i>	No		<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	No
<i>Myotis blythi</i>	No		<i>Hypsugo savii</i>	No
<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	Yes (DD)		<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Myotis brandtii</i>	No		<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Myotis capaccinii</i>	Yes (LRcd)		<i>Plecotus kolombatovici</i>	No
<i>Myotis daubentoni</i>	Yes (LRcd)		<i>Plecotus macrobullaris</i>	No
<i>Myotis emarginatus</i>	Yes (DD)		<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Myotis myotis</i>	No		<i>Tadarida teniotis</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	No		<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	No

3. Habitats and Roost Sites

Albania, as a Mediterranean country rich in limestone and caves is offering a variety of habitats that can be used as hibernacula and nursery roosts. Almost half of the reported species are known as cave-dwelling bats. Tunnels build in

the past decades for the military purposes and most of the mines that are out of operation represent new potential roosts available for bats. Some of them are already occupied by colonies of bats.

Few important forests are remaining in Albania, which explain that the forestial bats species are not often localised for the moment in Albania.

4. Threats

Several threats can be underlined.

Habitat loss and fragmentation : This is especially relevant for the case of bats using old growing forest as feeding and/or roosting places. Forests that were over exploited in the past starting from 1990 for timber and fire woods and those damaged by illegal logging in the last 15 years are likely to have strong impacts on bat species linked with forests

Human disturbance: In the last decade there was evidence of an increased number of people involved in outdoor activities, including visiting and illegal exploration of caves. In many caves we have found signs of the human disturbance inside caves, such as fires, killed and burned animals. Disturbance is particular high during hibernation and reproduction season. Due to low environmental public awareness in general, particularly on bats and their role in nature, the attitude and behavior of local people towards bats is very negative. To change this, it is important to undertake awareness raising campaigns and activities in schools and local communities.

Roost destruction: Some of the caves, military tunnels and mine tunnels, are blocked and used for other purposes by the local people. Some other caves are used as storage for solid wastes produced in urban and rural areas. During summer time, most of the caves that are easily accessed are used by shepherds as enclosures, causing disturbance and damage of the roosts for bats.

The use of pesticides is still localised in some areas, but the impact can be important on bats population.

5. Data Collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination

In the frame of the first PhD on bats in Albania, a monitoring of bats is on going in several places : the National Park of Prespa, important underground sites sent to EUROBATS, and to several others tunnel and caves in Albania.

Also, the Museum of Natural Sciences dependent from the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the University of Tirana in the framework of biodiversity monitoring program carries out some monitoring trips, but it is not comprehensive and it is done only for some selected sites as the budget is limited. This programme is funded by the state budget.

C Measures Taken to Implement Article III of the Agreement

6. Legal measures taken to protect bats, including enforcement action

Since the last National Report, a new Red List has been published by the government of Albania. Also, the EU directives on Habitats and Birds are planned to be officialy transposed in the Albanian Law for the end of 2014.

7. Sites identified and protected which are important to the conservation of bats

For the first time, Albania proposed to the EUROBATS secretariat sites to be added on the Important Underground sites database.

Gjirokaster Castle
Treni Cave
Shkemb i Kavajes
Ohrid Prespa Cave
Velçe Cave
Vanister Cave

Also, a project supported by EUROBATS and funded by the GIZ project CABRA is starting mid-June. Information will be collected on protected caves in Albania and bats using it. Following the results of this project, others important sites could be identified, and added to the EUROBATS database.

8. Consideration given to habitats which are important to bats

There is no research or other activities for the period under report related as habitats important for bats.

9. Activities to promote the awareness of the importance of the conservation of bats

The first ever bat night has been organised in September 2013, at Tirana. (http://www.eurobats.org/sites/default/files/documents/IBN_event_reports/First%20Albanian%20Bat%20Night.pdf)

In the frame of the project funded by the CABRA project, one workshop has been organised in June with local Staff of NGOs and Students on bats and monitoring.

A short movie on this project will be produced and broadcasted on social networks and during the 3rd edition of the Environmental Film Festival in 2015.

10. Responsible bodies, in accordance with Article III.5 of the Agreement, nominated for the provision of advice on bat conservation and management.

University of Tirana, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of Biology

11. Additional action undertaken to safeguard populations of bats

1. Recent and ongoing programmes (including research and policy initiatives) relating to the conservation and management of bats. In the case of research, summaries of completed projects should be provided, giving references where possible and acknowledging the sources of funding.

A PhD is actually on-going at the faculty Sciences at Tirana, concerning the dynamic of Population. Also, a master degree thesis has been produced on bats in peri-urban area.

Research in collaboration with German researchers is on-going concerning the ectoparasitism on bats (Schieffler, V.I., Bego, F., Théou, P., Podany, M., Pospischil, R., Hubner, S., 2013)

For the first time, Albanian samples have been send to Sebastien Puechmaille in the frame of his European-scale research on the White Nose Syndrom.

2. Consideration being given to the potential effects of pesticides on bats, and their food sources and efforts to replace timber treatment chemicals which are highly toxic to bats.

No studies have been realised to consider this issue.

D Functioning of the Agreement

14. Cooperation with other Range States.

Cooperation has improved in Albania, with several project on-going with Foreign Researchers. Also, the projet « Capacity Building in Albania for Bat-workers », funded by the GIZ-funded project « CABRA », has increased the collaboration between Albanian, Bulgarian, Montenegrin and Macedonian bats researchers and bat enthusiasts.

In the area of Prespa, the collaboration is still existing between the Albanian, Macedonian and Greek parts, but should further developped in the future.

15. Measures taken to implement Resolutions adopted by Meetings of Parties

The new legal framework in place will ensure the fulfillment of obligations deriving by Resolutions adopted by the meetings of Parties.