

AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF POPULATIONS OF EUROPEAN BATS

Albania's National Report on the Implementation of the Agreement 2003/ MoP4

A. General information

Name of Party:	Albania
Date of Report:	August 2003
Period Covered:	Describes the situation from 2000 and onwards
Competent Authority:	Ministry of Environment, Directorate for Nature Protection
Compiler of report:	Mr. Zamir Dedej, Director of the Nature Protection, Ministry of Environment, with the advice from the Museum of Natural Sciences (Dr. Ferdinand Bego, Mammalogist)

B. Status of bats in Albania

1. Summary of bat species occurring in Albania

Bats represent a fairly poor-studied group of mammals in Albania. In spite of the progress made recently, knowledge of the species richness, distribution, status and population trend is still limited. Currently, twenty-four bat species are known within the territory of Albania, and some 3-4 other species are expected to occur, based on available data from the neighboring countries (Greece, FYROM and Serbia-Montenegro).

2. Status and Trends

In the RED DATA BOOK of Albania (1997), twelve species of bats are included: *Rhinolophus blasii*, *R. euryale*, *R. hipposideros*, *Myotis bechstenii*, *M. daubentoni*, *M.*

nattereri, *Nyctalus leisleri*, *N. noctula*, *Plecotus auritus*, *P. austriacus*, *Vespertilio murinus*, and *Tadarida teniotis*.

A new RED-DATA BOOK of animal and plant species is underway in Albania. Table 1 shows the status and apparent population trends of the bat species known in Albania.

Table 1. Distribution, current status and apparent population trend of the bats known in Albania (source of data: Bego. F., Museum of Natural Sciences, 2003).

Species	Distribution status	Estimated Faunal Status	Apparent Trend
<i>Rhinolophus blasii</i>	Widespread	Common	Apparently declining
<i>Rhinolophus euryale</i>	Restricted	Rare	Declining
<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	Widespread	Common	Stable
<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Widespread	Rare	Apparently declining
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	Restricted	Rare	Declining
<i>Miniopterus schreibersi</i>	Widespread	Common	Apparently declining
<i>Myotis blythi</i>	Widespread	Very common	Stable
<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	Restricted	Data deficient	Unknown
<i>Myotis capaccinii</i>	Widespread	Common	Apparently declining
<i>Myotis daubentoni</i>	Restricted	Rare	Declining
<i>Myotis emarginatus</i>	Restricted	Data deficient	Unknown
<i>Myotis myotis</i>	Widespread	Very common	Stable
<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	Restricted	Data deficient	Unknown
<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	Restricted	Data deficient	Unknown
<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Restricted	Data deficient	Unknown
<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Restricted	Data deficient	Unknown
<i>Pipistrellus kuhli</i>	Restricted	Common	Stable
<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	Restricted	Common	Stable
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Widespread	Very common	Stable
<i>Hypsugo savii</i>	Widespread	Common	Stable
<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Restricted	Data deficient	Unknown
<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>	Restricted	Data deficient	Unknown
<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>	Restricted	Data deficient	Unknown
<i>Tadarida teniotis</i>	Restricted	Data deficient	Unknown

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.

4. Threats

Major threats to bats in Albania are: human disturbance, roost destruction and habitat loss.

Human disturbance

In the last 10-12 years there is an 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. A particular case is that of Treni's cave situated at the entrance of the Small Prespa Lake, that is filled in by sediments discharged by the deviated Devolli river for the last 20-25 years. Due to that the cave have become smaller and dried up and losed its former importance of hosting important nursery colonies of several bat species, especially for *Miniopterus schreibersi*, *Myotis capaccinii* and *Myotis daubentoni* and *Eptesicus serotinus* .

Habitat loss

This is especially the case of bats using old-growing forest as feeding and/or roosting places. Forests over-exploited in the past for timber and fire woods and those damaged by illegal logging in the last years have shown to have strong impacts on bat species linked with forests.

5. Data collection

The source of data is the Museum of Natural Sciences, Tirana University. Rruga e Kavajes, no. 132, Tirana, Albania

C. Measures Taken to Implement Article III of the Agreement

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

Albania has a law "On the Protection of the Wild Fauna and Hunting". The Ministry of Agriculture and the General Directory of Forestry and Pastures has made a regulation from this law with a list of protected species that includes all bats species, except *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*.

Although the basic law on environment has existed since 1967, the development of a modern legal system for environmental protection based on democratic principles began only in 1991. This legal system needs to be further developed and refined in the future.

Law on Environmental Protection (no. 8934, 5.09.2002)

Law on Hunting and Wildlife Protection (no. 7875, 1994)

Law on Protected Area (no. 8906, 2002)

Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (no. 8990, 23.01.2003)

In the Parliament is waiting for approval the Law on Protection of Biodiversity that will strengthen the species protection in the future.

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

Some main caves identified as important for the conservation of bats are included inside the protected areas and given the status of nature monument. As for non cave-dwelling bats, roosts are very poorly known. Surveys for underground roosts should be conducted in a near future in order to have a more complete list of sites important for bats.

8. Consideration given to habitats which are important for bats

Very little done so far to support research about feeding habitat use by bats in Albania. Under the MEDWET Coast project (UNDP-GEF) a survey of habitats important as feeding places for bats inside the project area (Narta and Karaburuni) has been conducted.

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

During 2001-2002 with the posters and other materials we organize short campaigns for the Albanian Bats Night. Mostly the campaign was directed to the local population with the participation of NGOs and the Regional Environmental Agencies.

During March-June 2003 based on the agreement concerning the promotion of awareness on bat protection in Eastern and South-eastern Europe, between the

Ministry of Environment and the EUROBATS Secretariat, there were published 7 different leaflets. For the distribution process the Ministry charge the Regional Environmental Agencies established in all the Municipalities of the countries, to distribute the copies for the local NGOs and mostly for the pupils of the schools (elementary and middle), based on approved plan. Also copies were made available to the Museum of Natural Sciences, for his didactic work with pupils and students. These copies will continue to be distributed for the people that will visit the Museum and for the interested people in the schools and universities.

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

Museum of Natural Sciences, Tirana University. Rruga e Kavajes, no. 132, Tirana, Albania

11. Additional action undertaken to safeguard population of bats

None

12. Recent on-going programs (including research) related to the conservation and management of bats

Under the Emerald-Network project in Albania financed by the Council of Europe, six ASCI (Divjaka NP, Tomorri NP, Llogora-Karaburuni NP, Butrinti NP, Prespa NP and Allamani PA) have been identified and included. On the list of fauna species, there are included bat species for each site.

Under the Wetland Inventory project in Albania (EKBY-GREECE and ECAT-Tirana), a full list of wetland sites have been elaborated. In the wetland data sheets for each of the sites there are collected and stored in the data base all the existing data on the fauna species, including bats.

13. Considerations being given to the potential effects of pesticides on bats, and efforts to replace timber treatment chemicals which are highly toxic to bats

No action has been carried out about this item.