

Agreement on the conservation of bats in Europe (EUROBATS)

Update to the national implementation report of Finland, 2004

A. General Information

Party: Finland

Date of Report: May 2004

Period covered by report: 2003(-2004)

Competent Authority: Senior Adviser Matti Osara, Ministry of the Environment, P. O. Box 380, FI-00131 Helsinki, Finland

Appointed Member of the Advisory Committee: Dr. Torsten Stjernberg, Finnish Museum of Natural History, P.O. Box 17; FIN-00014 University of Helsinki

This report was written by Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen, Matti Osara and Torsten Stjernberg.

B. Status of Bats within the Territory of the Party

1. Summary Details of Resident Species

11 species of bats have been observed in Finland. 5 of them are widespread (Southern and Central Finland) and occur with regularly reproducing populations (table 1). One further reproducing species, Natterer's bat, is considered as endangered (Rassi 2001). A new observation of Natterer's bat was made in Turku, SW Finland, in winter 2003-2004. There are only few previous records of this species in Finland (Stjernberg 1998, Siivonen & Wermundsen 2003 a). Apparently also *Pipistrellus nathusii* reproduces in Finland. In recent years this species has been observed several times in potential breeding habitats in southern Finland (Siivonen & Wermundsen 2003 a, Vihervaara 2004). New observation of *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* was made in South-Eastern Finland (Siivonen & Wermundsen 2003 b)

2. Status and Trends

Situation is similar to the previous report. Table 1 shows the distribution and status of bat species recorded in Finland. No estimates of population sizes are yet available.

Table 1. Status and distribution of the bat species recorded in Finland. Status categories: CR (critically endangered), E (endangered), V (vulnerable). No species was classified as NT (near threatened). Rassi et al. 2001.

Species	Distribution/status
<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	restricted, S Finland, vagrant
<i>Eptesicus nilssonii</i>	widespread, to S Lapland
<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>	restricted, S Finland, vagrant
<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	widespread, S & Central Finland, to 63° N
<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	restricted, S Finland, vagrant
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	restricted, S Finland (first record 2001)
<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	rare, S Finland/ Endangered
<i>Myotis brandtii</i>	widespread, S & Central Finland, to 64-65° N
<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	widespread, S & Central Finland, to 64-65° N
<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	widespread, S & Central Finland, to 63-64° N
<i>Myotis dasycneme</i>	restricted, E Finland (1 hibernating specimen 2002)

3. Habitats and Roost Sites

Some data on bat habitats and roost sites in Finland has been accumulating from recent research projects and surveys. However, more research is needed before an updated table of habitat use and roost sites of different bat species in Finland could be prepared. Data on hibernating sites of bats has been collected by the Finnish Museum of Natural History in co-operation with researchers and amateurs. This work will be continued.

4. Threats

Situation similar to the previous report.

5. Data Collection

The source of data is the Zoological Museum, Finnish Museum of Natural History, P. O. Box 17, FI-00014 University of Helsinki.

Basic information on hibernation, faunal composition and distribution in this report has been received from bat researchers and amateurs in Finland, as well as from published reports.

The Finnish Chiropterological Society is also collecting data on distribution and abundance of bat species as well as on locations of roosts and hibernacula.

References

Rassi, P., Alanen, A., Kanerva, T. & Mannerkoski, I. (eds.) 2001: Suomen lajien uhanalaisuus 2000. (in Finnish) [The endangered species of Finland]. – The Ministry of Environment, Helsinki. 432 p.

Siivonen, Y. & Wermundsen, T. 2003 a: First records of *Myotis dasycneme* and *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* in Finland. – *Vespertilio* 7: 177-179

Siivonen, Y. & Wermundsen, T. 2003 b: Distribution of Nathusiu's pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii* (Keyserling & Blasius, 1839) in Finland. - *Studia Chiropterologica* 3-4:43-47

Stjernberg, T. 1998: *Myotis nattereri* [Natterer's bat]. –in: Kotiranta, H., Uotila, P., Sulkava, S. & Peltonen, S.-L. (eds.): Red data book of East Fenoscandia: 185-186. – Ministry of the Environment, Finnish Environmental Institute, Botanical museum, Finnish Museum of Natural History. Helsinki.

Vihervaara, P. 2004: Turun ja Kaarinan Natura 2000-alueiden lepakkokartoitus 2003. (in Finnish) [A report of bat surveys in Natura 2000 sites in the municipalities of Turku and Kaarina] – Turun kaupunki, Ympäristönsuojelutoimisto, Julkaisuja /2004. In press.

C. Measures Taken to Implement Article III of the Agreement

6. Legal measures taken to prevent the deliberate capture, keeping or killing bats, including details of enforcement actions used to support such measures

The Finnish legislation concerning bat conservation is mostly similar to the previous report (see text below). Few changes concerning the Nature Conservation Act are to be approved soon: the wording “clearly identifiable” in § 49 shall be excluded and a compensating system (for landowners not able to use their property as intended) will be developed.

[All bats in Finland have been protected by law since 1923 (Nature Conservation Act 71/1923). All bats, both regularly occurring and vagrant species (bats), are protected according to the new Nature Conservation Act (1096/1996). According to its § 39, (which) concerning individuals of a protected species, following is forbidden: deliberate killing and capture, deliberate harming, deliberate disturbance particularly during the breeding or on any other sites of significance to their life cycles.

The Natterer's bat is considered as a species under strict protection (Nature Conservation Decree (160/1997, § 22, Appendix 4), hence a special action plan for its protection can be made. The deterioration and destruction of a habitat important for the survival of the Natterer's bat is prohibited after that the regional environment centre has made an official decision of the site's borderline.

All bat species in Finland belong to those species mentioned in the EC Council directive 92/43/EEC, Annex IV (a). Hence, according to § 49 (Nature Conservation Act 1096/1996) following is forbidden:

- the destruction and deterioration of clearly identifiable breeding sites and resting places
- to keep bats
- to transport bats
- to sell or exchange bats or to offer them for selling or exchange

It is possible to derogate from these provisions only for reasons mentioned in the habitats directive Article 16 (1). The permission can be given by the regional environment centre or the Finnish Environment Institute.

Finland is also a member of the Bern convention (since 21.3.1986), the Bonn convention (since 1.1.1989) and is, since October 20 1999, also a member of EUROBATS.

The Åland Islands have a legislation of their own on nature conservation. According to the Nature Conservation Act of the Åland Islands (82/1998), § 14, all mammals except game species, are permanently protected.]

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

Situation similar to the previous report.

8. Consideration given to habitats which are important to bats

Bat habitats have not, generally, affected the choice of sites to the Natura 2000 programme in Finland, but in a few areas in SW Finland bats were mentioned as a strengthening protectional value. In summer 2003 systematic bat surveys in Natura 2000 sites in SW Finland were conducted (Vihervaara 2004). In summer 2004, bats will be surveyed in several protected forest areas in SW Finland.

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

The dissemination of information about bats through articles in magazines, newspapers, radio and television programmes, via e-mail posting lists as well as by means of excursions has continued. This work has been conducted by the staff of different museums, nature conservation authorities and by researchers and amateurs engaged in bats in Finland.

A leaflet on bats, issued by the Ministry of the Environment, has been sent to people asking for information on bats as well as to people participating in field trips. Information on bat boxes has been distributed during many years.

Several field trips (in different municipalities) for introducing bats to public have been very popular.

The Bat CD “We are your friends”, provided by EUROBATS, was sent by the EUROBATS Secretary to the Finnish Broadcasting Company and it has been used in nature programmes.

The Chiropterological Society of Finland, which was founded in 2002, has now ca. 70 members and quite lot of activity.

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

(a) Zoological Museum, Finnish Museum of Natural History, P.O. Box 17, FI-00014 University of Helsinki.

(b) The Finnish Environment Institute, P. O. Box 140, FI-00251 Helsinki.

11. Additional action undertaken to safeguard populations of bats

The topic ‘bats in buildings’ has aroused some discussion and guidelines for this issue are needed to safeguard the house dwelling bat colonies. The guidelines for property owners and others are in preparation.

12. Recent ongoing programmes (including research) relating to the conservation and management of bats

Several Master’s theses on bat ecology are in preparation in different universities. Also several survey projects are going on or just completed in southern Finland. Data on hibernating sites of bats is being collected by the Finnish Museum of Natural History from different sources, i.a. with the aid of bat researchers and amateurs as well as the public.

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

Situation similar to the previous report. A report to EUROBATS was provided by Matti Osara 2001. The most harmful pesticides are forbidden in Finland.

D. Functioning of the Agreement

14. Co-operation with other Range States

The University of Turku together with the Finnish Museum of Natural History, The Finnish Chiropterological Society (FCS) and the Environmental Office of Turku organized Baltic Bat Meeting 2003 on 24th-25th October on Seili Island, near the city of Turku, SW Finland. The aim of the meeting was to establish an effective network between bat researchers from the Northern Baltic, and to promote bat studies and bat conservation research. As an outcome of the meeting, a project plan of migration study in the Baltic area has been prepared by prof. Ingemar Ahlén and Lothar Bach. The presentations and notes of the meeting are available on the web-site of FCS (<http://www.lepakko.org>).

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

Resolution 2.1 Consistent Monitoring Methodologies.

In Finland, line transect method seems to be the most used monitoring method. Olli Haukkovaara and Kari Salovaara are preparing guidelines for the line transect monitoring method based on the manuscript of prof. Ingemar Ahlén and Dr. Johnny de Jong from Sweden.

Resolution 2.4. Transboundary Programme: Habitat Proposals

Since the knowledge of hibernating bats in Finland still is rather scarce, and wintering strategies here presumably differs, at least in details, from those in more southern regions, basic inventories of potential sites will be continued. A report of what is known is under preparation and this data will be submitted to the database maintained by the secretariat.

Resolution 4.3 Guidelines for the protection and Management of Important Underground Habitats

So far, few underground sites with more than a couple of bats have been found in Finland. The guidelines will be used to safeguard the most important underground hibernation sites when possible.

Resolution 4.4 Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management

The new Forest Act safeguards the key biotopes of forests, e.g. small bodies of water, which can be of great importance for bats. However, more research on bats using the forest habitats as well as co-operation with forest managers is needed.

Resolution 4.5 Guidelines for the Use of Remedial Timber Treatment

See point 13.

Resolution 4.6 Guidelines for the Issue of Permits for the Capture and Study of captured Wild Bats

Referring to this resolution, the Ministry of the Environment has asked the Finnish Museum of Natural History to organize ringing and marking of bats in Finland.

Resolution 4.7 Wind Turbines and Bat populations

There is no published data about the impacts of wind turbines on bat populations in Finland. The potential adverse effects of the wind turbines on bats will be taken into consideration when new wind turbines are to be built.

Resolutions (2.8, 3.8 &) 4.9 On the implementation of conservation and management plan

Efforts to implement this resolution are presented in this report.