

THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF POPULATIONS OF EUROPEAN BATS
(EUROBATS)

The National Report on the Implementation of the Agreement in Georgia

A. General Information

- *Name of Party Range State:* Georgia
- *Date of Report:* March, 2005
- *Period Covered:* June, 2004 – March, 2005
- *Competent Authority:* The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia

B. Status of Bats within the Territory of the Party.1. *Summary details of resident species, by territory*

All bat species occur in Georgia are protected under the framework of the Convention on "Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals" (CMS) and its Agreement on "Conservation of Populations of European Bats" (EUROBATS).

Referring to literary data, 29 bat species (order *Chiroptera*) occur in Georgia. The following seven bat species are included in the "Red Data Book of Georgia" (1982): *Rhinolophus mehelyi*, *Myotis bechsteinii*, *M. emarginatus*, *Barbastella barbastellus*, *Nyctalus leisleri*, *N. lasiopterus* and *Miniopterus schreibersii*. The following ten species are listed in the IUCN Red Data List of Threatened Species: *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, *Rhinolophus euryale*, *Rhinolophus mehelyi*, *Barbastella barbastellus*, *Myotis bechsteinii*, *Myotis emarginatus* (species with category VU), *Miniopterus schreibersii*, *Nyctalus lasiopterus*, *Nyctalus leisleri*, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* (species with category LR/nt).

2. *Status and Trends*

During the last decades, status and trends of bat species distributed in Georgia were not studied. Results of recently conducted field-works showed, that mainly the following bat species inhabit in Georgia: *Pippistrellus pippistrellus*, *Eptesicus serotinus*, *Myotis blythii*, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, *Rhinolophus hipposideros*.

Tab.1 Status of bat species.

Scientific Name	Abundance	Georgian Red Data Book	IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
<i>Rhinolophus euryale</i>	rare		VU
<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	common		LR/nt
<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	common		VU
<i>Rhinolophus mehelyi</i>	very rare	rare species	VU
<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	very rare	rare species	VU
<i>Barbastella leucomelas</i> *	????		
<i>Eptesicus bottae</i> *	????		
<i>Eptesicus nilssoni</i> *	????		
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	common		
<i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i>	rare	rare species	LR/nt
<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	very rare	rare species	VU
<i>Myotis blythii</i>	abundant		

<i>Myotis emarginatus</i>	rare	rare species	VU
<i>Myotis brandtii</i>	rare		
<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	common		
<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	rare		
<i>Myotis doubentonii</i>	new (found 2000)		
<i>Nyctalus lasiopterus</i>	very rare	rare species	LR/nt
<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	rare	rare species	LR/nt
<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	common		
<i>Pipistrellus kuhlii</i>	common		
<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	common		
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	common		
<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	new (found 2000) abundant		
<i>Hypsugo savii</i>	rare		
<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	rare		
<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>	rare		
<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>	rare		
<i>Tadarida teniotis</i> *	????		

*- According to literary data, these species possibly inhabit in Georgia, but not yet confirmed by up-to-date scientific research.

It should be emphasized that bats maternity and wintering roosts demands more detailed and long-term research.

3. Habitats and Roost Sites

Since 1998, we observed 22 karsts caves, about 260 artificial caves and 4 mines.

4. Threats

Main threats for bats (especially, increased anthropogenic pressure on biodiversity) are consequences of energy and economic crisis existing in Georgia in addition with low public environmental awareness. Due to these reasons, there are facts of over exploitation and illegal cutting of forests causing crucial changes and destruction of habitats and roosts sites. Also, restoration of historical buildings and caves can be considered as threats for bat sites. As for pesticides, due to existing economical crisis and its high prices, pesticides are not actively used in agricultural sector and consequently, pesticides cannot be considered as a serious threat for bats in Georgia.

5. Data Collection

For the time being, we continue observation of old bats roosts and finding of new ones. In 2004, our field-works were mainly conducted in the Eastern Georgia and several districts of the Western Georgia. In 2004, field-works on bat species were conducted in the frame of the following activities, where bats were identified as key species:

- Elaboration of the Conservation Management Plan for Alazani Floodplain Forest (in the frame of GEF/WB Project - ``Development of Protected Areas System in Eastern Georgia``)
- Elaboration of the Planning and Management Plan for Protected Areas of the Central Caucasus (in the frame of GEF/WB Project - ``Development of Protected Areas System in Eastern Georgia``)

- Wildlife monitoring along Baku-Tbilisi-Ceihan pipeline in Georgia.

Also, preparation of catalogue, containing all important karsts caves for bats, is underway.

Article titled as "Findings of Chiroptera in Georgia for last 140 years" is published in the "Plecotus et al." - magazine of the Bats Commission of the Teriological Society of Russian Academy of Sciences. This article depicts all cases of bats findings in Georgia.

The book - ``Cadastre of Small Mammals (*Insectivora, Chiroptera, Lagomorpha, Rodentia*) of Georgia`` was published in 2004. Author of the book is Dr. Alexander Bukhnikashvili, President of the NGO – ``CAMPESTER``.

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

Catching of bats in Georgia is regulated by the law on Animals World and correspondingly, is subjected to license system. According to requirements of this law, based on recommendations and decisions of a special Inter-institutional Scientific Council, license for catching is issued by the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources. The issued license clearly indicates number of samples and tools to be used for catching.

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

Two sites are identified as important ones in terms of bats conservation. The first site is the karsts-massif in the Western Georgia (between cities Zugdidi and Chiatura). The second site is David Garedji Caves-Monastery complex in the Eastern Georgia. These sites are not officially protected.

8. Considerations given to habitats which are important to bats

No considerations are given to habitats important to bats.

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

- In the frame of Small Grants Programme arranged by the Company - British Petroleum, the brochure - ``*We flight at night*``, dedicated to public awareness raising, was issued. Additionally, stakeholders meetings were organized in different districts of Georgia.
- The workshop on ``Bat Detectors and Monitoring Methods`` was convened on 17-20 June, 2004 in Ckaltubo, Georgia. It was organized by Georgian NGO - ``Field Researchers` Union`` (CAMPESTER) in close cooperation with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT). The workshop was financially supported by Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), WWF Netherlands and Dutch organization "Milieukontakt Oost-Europa".

A main goal of the Workshop was to share knowledge and experience on using of bats detectors and monitoring methods. The workshop was attended by field researchers, scientists and experts from governmental and non-governmental organizations representing four countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia. The

Workshop was led by invited resources persons - Dr. Colin Catto (BCT / UK) and Ir Herman Limpens (VZ / NL).

- Posters - "European Bat Night" were distributed;
- In the frame of European Bat Night, bats observations were conducted in two cities (Tbilisi and Rustavi) in September of 2004;

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

Responsible bodies will be designated by the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Recourses.

11. Additional action undertaken to safeguard populations of bats

The strategic document - ``National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan `` (NBSAP) has been adopted by Georgian Government in February, 2005. In this document bats are identified as one of the priority species.

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

- Currently, a list of caves, monasteries and churches, representing important roosts for bat species in Georgia, is being prepared.
- Elaboration of the Conservation Management Plan for ``Davit Gareji Complex`` situated in the South-Eastern part of Georgia. Bats were identified as key species in this Draft Conservation Management Plan.

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

No considerations in this regard.

D. Functioning of the Agreement

14. Co-operation with other Range States

There are consultations, exchange of relevant information and materials with Parties to the Agreement.

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- Mr. Ioseb Natradze – Campester (Field Researchers` Union);
 - Dr. A. Bukhnikashvili (Scientific worker in the Institute of Zoology of Academy of Science of Georgia, President of the Field Researchers` Union - ``Campester``);
 - Mr. Andrei S. Kandaurov, Institute of Zoology of Academy of Science of Georgia;
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