

**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:* June, 2006
- *Period Covered:* October, 2003 – June, 2006
- *Competent Authority:* The Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources 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 it's Agreement on ``Conservation of Populations of European Bats`` (EUROBATS).

According to literary data there are 29 species of Bats (order *Chiroptera*) occurring 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*.

2. Status and Trends

During last decades status and trends of bat species distributed in Georgia were not studied. Based on our research it was revealed that the following bat species are common in Georgia: *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *Eptesicus serotinus*, *Myotis blythii*, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, *Rhinolophus hipposideros*. Species - *Pipistrellus kuhlii* occur with great number in the extreme Eastern part of Georgia. Also *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* were often found in the Eastern Georgia during our research.

Tab.1 Status of bat species

Scientific Name	Abundance	Georgian Red Data Book
<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	common	
<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	common	
<i>Rhinolophus euryale</i>	rare	
<i>Rhinolophus mehelyi</i>	very rare	rare species
<i>Myotis blythii</i>	common	
<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	very rare	rare species
<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	rare	
<i>Myotis emarginatus</i>	rare	rare species

<i>Myotis brandtii</i>	rare	
<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	common	
<i>Myotis doubentonii</i>	new (found 2000)	
<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	rare	
<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>	rare	
<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	very rare	rare species
<i>Barbastella leucomelas</i> *	????	
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	abundant	
<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	common	
<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	common	
<i>Pipistrellus kuhlii</i>	common	
<i>Hypsugo savii</i>	rare	
<i>Nyctalus lasiopterus</i>	rare	rare species
<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	common	
<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	rare	rare species
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	common	
<i>Eptesicus bottae</i> *	????	
<i>Eptesicus nilssonii</i> *	????	
<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>	rare	
<i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i>	rare	rare species
<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 25 karsts caves, about 280 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 2003-2006, our field-works were mainly conducted in several districts of Eastern Georgia and Western Georgia. During these years, 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``*)
- Elaboration of the Conservation Management Plan for ``Davit Gareji Complex`` situated in the South-Eastern part of Georgia (*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*

In the previous years, capture of bats in Georgia was regulated by the law on Animals World and correspondingly, was subjected to license system.

At the moment, revision of national environmental legislation is being done which will be significantly reflected on the law on Animals World and correspondingly, on legal measures to prevent the deliberate capture, keeping or killing bats. New rules and regulations concerned will be in place by the end of the year of 2006.

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).

- The book ``On Cadastre of Small Mammals (Insectivora, Chiroptera, Lagomorpha, Rodentia) of Georgia`` will be published in this month (May, 2004). Author of the book is Mr. Alexander Bukhnikashvili, President of the NGO – ``CAMPESTER``.
- Posters - "European Bat Night" were distributed;
- In the frame of European Bat Night, bats observations were conducted

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

As a responsible body for the provision of advice on bat conservation and management, in accordance with article III.5 of the Agreement will be nominated Institute of Zoology (Academy Science of Georgia).

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

- Institute of Zoology of Georgia and NGO Field Researchers` Union ``Campester`` are involved in the implementation of the project ``Sustainable Bat Conservation in Caucasus Mountain Regions``. The project is implemented in close cooperation with colleagues from Romania (Foundation for School), Poland (Museum and Institute of Zoology), The Netherlands (Society for Study and Conservation of Mammals), and Armenia (Institute of Zoology, Armenian Academy of Science). This project is funded by BP Conservation Programme. In the frame of this project, the regional training on bats detectors application is planned in Georgia, 28-30 June, 2006. Besides representatives from project participating countries, representatives of Azerbaijan and Ukraine will attend the regional training. Following the training, a joint expedition together with Polish and Rumanian colleagues will be arranged in Georgia.

- Institute of Zoology of Georgia and NGO Field Researchers` Union ``Campester`` are involved in the implementation of the project - ``Ecology, behavior and population genetics of the forest living Bechstein`s bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*) in two glacial refuges: South-Eastern Europe and the Caucasus`` together with colleagues from Switzerland (Zoological Institute University of Zurich), Bulgaria (National Museum of Natural History, Sofia), Russia (Institute of Ecology of Mountain Territories, Krasnodar), Serbia (University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Biology, Novi Sad). This project is funded by Swiss National Science Foundation.
- In addition, wildlife monitoring, conducted along the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceihan BP pipeline in Georgia, includes bats species monitoring component. Consequently, monitoring of bats population in certain areas of Georgia is performed.

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.

- 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``);
- Mrs. Ann Rukhadze *The Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia*.
- Mr. Andrei S. Kandaurov, Institute of Zoology of Academy of Science of Georgia;
