

**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: July 2010

Period Covered: June 2006 – June 2010

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 the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (EUROBATS).

Twenty-eight species of Bats (order *Chiroptera*) occur in Georgia. The following four bat species are included in the Red List of Georgia (2006): *Rhinolophus mehelyi*, *R. euryale*, *Myotis bechsteinii* and *Barbastella barbastellus*.

2. Status and Trends

During last decades, status and trends of bat species distributed in Georgia were not studied. Following results of recently conducted researches, status and trends of the bats species in Georgia are as presented in the table 1 below:

**Tab.1** Status and trends of bat species in Georgia

Scientific Name	Abundance	Georgian Red Data List	Statuses by National Conservation action plan
<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	common		VU
<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	common		LC
<i>Rhinolophus euryale</i>	rare	VU	VU
<i>Rhinolophus mehelyi</i>	very rare	VU	CR
<i>Rhinolophus blasii</i>	rare		
<i>Myotis blythii</i>	common		LC
<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	very rare	VU	NE
<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	rare		
<i>Myotis emarginatus</i>	rare		EN
<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	VU	VU
<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		DD
<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	common		
<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	rare		
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	common		
<i>Eptesicus nilssonii</i>	very rare		
<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>	rare		
<i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i>	rare		VU
<i>Tadarida teniotis</i> *	very rare		NE

\*- According to literary data, bat detector and visual observation. But not yet confirmed by catching.

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

### 3. Habitats and Roost Sites

Within the reporting period, over 30 field-observations (*expeditions or short-term field-works*) were performed in Georgia and more than 70 points were investigated. Besides, during these researches, key bats habitats were identified and more detailed information on that can be found on the web-link: [http://www.campester.org/index.php?name=key\\_habitats&lang=eng](http://www.campester.org/index.php?name=key_habitats&lang=eng)

### 4. Threats

For the time being, the main threat for bats is large-scale infrastructural and development projects, such as high-ways and roads construction, gas- and pipelines developments etc. Due to such kinds of projects, there are facts of 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. The following projects were implemented during the reporting period:

#### **(i) Project - ``Development and Capacity Building of Transboundary Bats Monitoring Network in the Caucasus``**

In the period of 2006-2008, The Field Researchers' Union Campester implemented *the Development and Capacity Building of transboundary Bats Monitoring Network in the Caucasus Project* through financial support of the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF). Within the framework of the Project, the first attempt to conduct the joint researches at the large portion of the Caucasus simultaneously was made. As a result, it became possible to simultaneously evaluate the current status of the bats. The partners to the project were Centre for Biological Diversity (Azerbaijan), Union of Armenian Nature Protectors (Armenia) and Institute of Mountain Ecology of the Kabardino-Balkarian Scientific Centre of Academy of Sciences of Russia. Within the reporting period, over 90 field observation trips (*expeditions or short-term excursions*) were performed in all three countries; 234 points were observed: 33 in Azerbaijan, 49 in Armenia, 62 in Georgia and 90 in Russia. Out of 35 bat species existing in Caucasus, 19 were registered in Azerbaijan, 17 in Armenia, 23 in Georgia and 22 in Georgia.

In addition, in the frame of the given project, the basis of unified Caucasian monitoring network has been created and three working meetings were convened through involving experts and volunteers from the participating countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Russia). As a result of the project, the Regional Action Plan for Caucasian Bats Conservation was developed. Also, one sub-regional (for the Russian Caucasus) and three National Action Plans (for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) were elaborated and submitted to the Governments.

Along with the CEPF priority species – *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, *Rhinolophus euryale*, *Rhinolophus mehelyi*, *Myotis bechsteinii*, *Myotis emarginatus*, *Myotis schaubi*, *Barbastella barbastellus* (IUCN listed species), seven additional bats species protected by the legislation of the participating countries were included into the list of the objects of special observation; these are: *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, *Myotis blythii*, *Myotis dasycneme*, *Nyctalus lasiopterus*, *Barbastella leucomelas*, *Tadarida teniotis*, *Miniopterus schreibersii*. Observations of any other species were also recorded, but they are not analysed in this Report, since they do not fall under the subject of this Project.

#### **(ii) Project - "Conservation Status of Caucasian bats. Monitoring techniques and conservation strategies"**

The project - "Conservation Status of Caucasian bats: monitoring techniques and conservation strategies" was implemented in 2006 through financial support of BP, the Dutch organization "Milieukontakt Oost-Europa" and WWF Netherlands. In the frame of the project the training workshop on "Bats Detectors and Monitoring Methodologies" was convened in Nunisi, Georgia, 27 June – 1 July, 2006. Working sessions of the workshop were divided into two parts: lectures and field works. The training involved a mixture of lectures and practical sessions in the field. Main goals of the Workshop were to:

- ⇒ Identify conservation status of bats in the target region - Caucasus Mountains;
- ⇒ Provide training on bats detectors using in identification and biodiversity assessments;
- ⇒ Provide training on monitoring methodologies for priority bats species;
- ⇒ To share knowledge, existing experience and skill in the field concerned between workshop representatives.

The workshop was attended by field researchers, scientists, bats experts from governmental and non-governmental organizations representing 6 countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Romania and Poland. The Workshop was led by invited resource persons - Herman Limpens, Society for Study and Conservation of Mammals, the Netherlands.

#### **(iii) 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"**

In 2006-2008, NGO Field Researchers' Union "Campester" was 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 was funded by Swiss National Science Foundation.

#### **(iv) Project - "Monitoring of bats mitigation measures in a Baku-Ceyhan pipeline influence corridor – Tetrtskaro district"**

In 2008, the project - "Monitoring of bats mitigation measures in a Baku-Ceyhan pipeline influence corridor – Tetrtskaro district" was implemented by NGO Field Researchers' Union "Campester" through financial support of BP. In the frame of the project, 50 bat-boxes were placed in the pilot-forest area in the eastern part of Georgia – Tetrtskaro district, as implementation of one of bats mitigation measures. The monitoring of the pilot area and bat-boxes continues and applied annually through BP's financial support.

#### **(v) Project - "Monitoring of the Red Listed Inland Vertebrates in Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline Influence Corridor"**

The given project was started in 2004. Wildlife monitoring along Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline was conducted in 2006-2009. This monitoring was stopped in 2010 due to lack of funding from BP's side.

## **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

Generally, bats species are protected at national level through the law on ``Animals World`` and the law on ``Red List and Red Book`` of Georgia. These laws create a base for protection of bats species and also, regulates their capture for scientific purposes. These laws state that the special permission should be issued for the deliberate capture of bats species for scientific purposes. However, due to lack of further additional regulatory mechanism, it is impossible to implement this regulation. The problem is that, the permissions are issued under the law on ``Licenses and Permissions``. This law has the special list of types of licenses and permits can be issued and permissions / or licenses for the deliberate capture of animals for scientific purposes are not in this list. Thus, there is a gap in the relevant national legislation of Georgia which represents an obstacle in regulation of the deliberate capture of bats for scientific purposes.

### 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.

Also, the Imereti-Caves protected area was established. This protected area encompasses several caves that are important for bats species.

### 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

Almost all projects listed in the paragraph B.5 (data collection) above had public-awareness raising components which were successfully implemented and included different kinds of activities such as lectures, sites-visits, meetings, promo-materials etc.

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

The Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources serves as the responsible body for the provision of advice on bat conservation and management, in accordance with article III.5 of the Agreement.

### 11. Additional action undertaken to safeguard populations of bats

The National Action Plan for Bats Conservation was developed, published and submitted to the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia for further consideration and follow-up.

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

There are two ongoing activities in this regard: (i) Monitoring of 50 bat-boxes placed in the pilot-forest area in the eastern part of Georgia – Tetrtskaro district are underway as a follow-up of the project - ``Monitoring of bats mitigation measures in a Baku-Ceyhan pipeline influence corridor – Tetrtskaro district``. (ii) The project - ``Investigation of vertebrate animals in mountains of Eastern Georgia`` is being implemented by the Institute of Zoology of Ilia State University of Georgia. Under this project, bats species are considered as one of the key groups for the research.

### 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

The projects listed under the paragraph B.5 (data collection) are clear examples of close cooperation and partnership at both national and regional levels. As results of these projects, the following articles were produced:

- ⇒ Bukhnikashvili A., Natradze I. 2008. Geoffroy's Bat (*Myotis emarginatus*) in Georgia. Present Status of the Species // Proceedings of the Institute of Zoologi. "Metsniereba", Tbilisi, Vol. XXIII: 177-179.
- ⇒ Gazaryan S., Bukhnikashvili A., Kandaurov A., Natradze I. 2008. New Status of the *Myotis daubentonii* in the Caucasus // Abstracts of the XI-th European Bat Research Symposium, Editors: Hutson A., and Lina P.; Cluj-Napoca, Romania 18-th – 20-th August 2008: 50.
- ⇒ Ghazaryan, Astghik, Zoltan Nagy, Tomasz Postawa, Eduard Yavruyan, George Papov, Alexandr Bukhnikashvili, and Ioseb Natradze. 2006. Sustainable Bat Conservation in Caucasus Mountain Region. Conservation Without Borders. Society for Conservation Biology 20th Annual Meeting • 24–28 June 2006 San Jose, California, USA: 15.
- ⇒ Yavruyan E., Rakhmatulina I., Bukhnikashvili A., Kandaurov A., Natradze I., Gazaryan S. 2008. Bats Conservation Action Plan for the Caucasus // Publ. Universal, Tbilisi: 87 pp.
- ⇒ Bukhnikashvili A. Kandaurov A. Natradze I. 2008 Bats Conservation Action Plan for Georgia, Publ. Universal, Tbilisi: 102 pp.