

## **AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF BATS IN EUROPE** **Report on the implementation of the agreement in Latvia**

**2003-2004**

### **A. General Information**

*Name of Party:* Latvia  
*Date of Report:* 14 May 2004  
*Period covered:* May 2003 – April 2004  
*Competent Authority:* Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Latvia.

### **B. Status of Bats within the Territory of the Range State**

#### ***1. Summary Details of Resident Species***

Situation similar to the last report. The records of the recently found species *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* are now published in Pētersons G. 2003. Observations of *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* (Chiroptera: Vespertilionidae) in Latvia and in Belarus. Acta Zoologica Lituanica. Volumen 13, Numerus 1, 89.

#### ***2. Status and Trends***

Situation similar to the last report.

The largest hibernacula of *Barbastella barbastellus* in Latvia with at least 9 individuals was found in a basement of an estate in winter 2003/2004. The three known hibernation sites of this species are situated in a restricted area in middle part of the country. Thus the existence of a breeding population in this area is possible, probably being the north-eastern most one in the distribution area of this species.

#### ***3. Habitats and Roost Sites***

Situation similar to the last report.

#### ***4. Threats***

Situation similar to the last report.

#### ***5. Data collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination***

1. The project "Preparation for Latvia's Compliance with the Emerald and Natura 2000 Networks of Protected Areas" (EMERALD) was carried out in 2001-2003 in Latvia to identify the potential Natura 2000 sites. The project was funded by the Danish government (DANCEE fund). The efforts of the bat specialists were focussed mainly on the survey of the pond bat *Myotis dasycneme*. In summer 2003 inventory of all breeding colonies of this species known in Latvia was carried out. Totally 27 roosts, mainly churches, were checked. 18 of them were occupied by pond bat colonies. Emergence counts were carried out in all colonies. The total number of adult females estimated for all colonies was 1100 individuals. A

proposal was done to assign a status of strictly protected sites for 21 roosts of *Myotis dasycneme*.

2. The Bat Monitoring Programme was established in 2003 as a part of the National Biodiversity Monitoring Programme. The programme is financed by state and is foreseen to be as a long-term project. Several monitoring methods are selected to cover as many bat species as possible:
  - counts of bats hibernating in undisturbed large underground habitats like caves, basements, fortifications (*Myotis daubentonii*, *M. dasycneme*, *M. nattereri*, *M. brandtii*, *M. mystacinus*, *Eptesicus nilssonii*, *Plecotus auritus*, *Barbastella barbastellus*);
  - counts of hibernating bats in root cellars (*Eptesicus nilssonii*, *Plecotus auritus*);
  - emergence counts at breeding colonies in buildings (*M. dasycneme*, *Pipistrellus nathusii*, *Eptesicus nilssonii*);
  - monitoring of bats in hunting habitats with bat detectors (*Eptesicus nilssonii*, *Pipistrellus nathusii*, *Nyctalus noctula*);
  - monitoring of migrating bats at the sea coast with bat detectors (*Pipistrellus nathusii*, *Nyctalus noctula*).

#### **6. Legal measures taken to protect bats, including enforcement action**

The revised List of Specially Protected Species and Species with Exploitation Limits is prepared by the Ministry of Environment. It should be adopted as Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers this year. The newly found species *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* is included in the list, which comprises thus all resident bat species of Latvia.

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

Bat species are not included in the present Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers on the Establishment, Protection and Management of Micro-reserves. Hence there is no legal base to establish protected sites or areas (micro-reserves) for bats. However the list of species of the Regulations is under the revision and it is proposed by bat experts to include all bat species in it. The proposals to establish micro-reserves for the most important hibernation sites and for about 20 nursery roosts of the pond bat *Myotis dasycneme* are prepared.

#### **8. Consideration given to habitats which are important to bats**

None.

#### **9. Activities to promote the awareness of the importance of the conservation of bats**

- Bat night events were organized in 2003 by the National Park Kemeru and by the National Park Gauja. In Kemeru the event took part at the end of July. It was started with an introductory lecture and a slide show, and was followed by observation of hunting bats visually and with bat detectors in the old park of Kemeru. Few specimens of two species were captured with mist nets and demonstrated for the public. Nearly 100 participants attended the bat event in Kemeru. The Bat Night at the National Park Gauja was organized on August

30 in an estate. Despite the extremely bad weather conditions (heavy rain) about 60 participants arrived. A lecture on bats was given by a bat expert.

- A two days bat detector workshop was organised in the national park Gauja in June 2003.
- Leaflets on bats were produced by National Park Gauja and by State Reserve Teiči.
- Several articles on bat items were published in magazines and newspapers during the last year.

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

Not yet nominated.

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

Two former soviet missile bases were improved as hibernation sites for bats in autumn 2003. The underground tunnels and missile shafts were covered with additional layer of soil to improve the microclimate inside. The entrances were fenced with metal grilles. The project was carried out by the Ltd. Latvijas Valsts Meži (Latvian State Forests) following the instructions of the bat experts. The counts of hibernating bats in one of missile bases in February 2004 showed an increased number of bats compared to previous years.

***12. Recent and ongoing programs (including research and policy initiatives) relating to the conservation and management of bats. In the case of research, summaries of completed projects should be provided, giving references where possible and acknowledging the sources of funding***

- Emerald project was finished in 2004. The main outcome of the project was the list of potential Natura 2000.
- Bat Monitoring Programme was established in 2003 (see under 5)

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

None

**C. Functioning of the Agreement**

***14. Co-operation with other Range States***

Two participants from Latvia attended at the First Baltic Bat meeting in October 24-25, 2003 in Nagu, Finland, organized by Finnish Museum of Natural History and by University Turku. A possible co-operation in bat research was discussed during the meeting.

Situation similar to the last report.

## ***15. Measures taken to implement Resolutions adopted by Meeting of Parties***

### *Resolution 4.9 – Implementation of the Conservation and management Plan (3003-2006)*

The monitoring of bats is included in the National Biological Diversity program and was started in 2003. Three bat species nominated as priority species for monitoring by EUROBATS are included in this programme. These are *Eptesicus nilssonii*, *Nyctalus noctula* and *Myotis dasycneme*.

The timing of autumn migration and the migration routes of bats were studied at the sea coast in south-western part of Latvia in 2003.

An effort to promote public awareness of bats and their conservation has been taken as presented in this Report (see under 9).