

# **AGREEMENT FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BATS IN EUROPE (EUROBATS)**

## **Report on the implementation of the Agreement in the United Kingdom**

### **2003**

This document reports on actions undertaken by the UK in 2003 to meet its obligations under the Agreement.

#### **A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Party: United Kingdom

Date of Report: January 2004

Period Covered by Report: January – December 2003

Competent Authority: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
(Defra)

Changes Regarding:

Competent Authority -  
Appointed member of the Advisory Committee -  
Membership of other committees/working groups -

#### **A. Abbreviations**

BCT	Bat Conservation Trust
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EHS	Environment and Heritage Service (Northern Ireland)
EN	English Nature
FC	Forestry Commission
GONHS	Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
NAW	National Assembly for Wales
NBMP	National Bat Monitoring Programme
NERC	Natural Environmental Research Council
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
SE	Scottish Executive
SNCOs	Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations
VWT	Vincent Wildlife Trust
WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

## B. STATUS OF BATS WITHIN THE TERRITORY OF THE PARTY

### 1. Summary Details of Resident Species

#### Forestry

Leisler's bat has now been recorded in FC woodland in Cambridgeshire (previously only recorded in Northamptonshire). A serotine bat was recorded in a bat box for the first time in East Anglia Forest District. Attached is a spreadsheet summarising changes since last year (Annex A).

#### Guernsey

Common Pipistrelle – common, widespread  
Grey long-eared – fairly common, widespread  
Nathusius' Pipistrelle – rare (winter only)  
Brown long-eared – 3 only

#### Scotland

No change since 2002

#### Jersey, Channel Islands

In 2003 of a two-year survey baseline carried out between 2000 and 2002 was completed. Ecological data were collected using a variety of survey methods e.g. ultrasound detector survey, roost searches, mist netting. Eight species of bat have been recorded as resident locally and status and distribution maps have been produced.

In light of the rabies incident in November 2003 all dead bats continue to be sent to the Veterinary Laboratories Agency for testing under a passive surveillance programme.

#### Northern Ireland

Common name	Specific name	Population estimate	Distribution/status
Leisler's bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	*18 000	Widespread/frequent
Brown long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	*45 000 +	Widespread/frequent
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	*1 150 000	Widespread/common
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	*580 000	Widespread/common
Nathusius' pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	*12 000	Widespread/rare
Natterer's bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	*48 000	Widespread/rare **
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	*410 000	Widespread/frequent **
Whiskered bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	*24 000	Widespread/rare **
Brandt's bat	<i>Myotis brandtii</i>	Not yet known	Not yet confirmed

\* Mean population estimates based on flying individuals (see Russ, 1999)

\*\* Status not confirmed, due to lack of information

Russ, J.M. 1999. *The microchiroptera of Northern Ireland: community composition, habitat associations and ultrasound*. The Queen's University of Belfast. Unpublished PhD thesis.

#### United Kingdom

There are 16 species of bat resident in the UK. Additionally, also found in 2003: -

- March 03 – a European free-tailed bat was found in Cornwall. It remains in captivity with a bat rehabilitator.
- March 03 – a Mexican free-tailed bat was found in a Kent port (having arrived in a container from the USA). In consultation with Defra, the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) arranged its return via American Airlines to the Bat World Sanctuary in Texas for rehabilitation.
- December 03 – the young male greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*) was recorded in 2003 at the same hibernation roost as in 2002. Sussex Bat Group

organised a “Greater Mouse-Eared Hunt” in the summer of 2003, but none were found. There are no maternity roosts or females of this species recorded, and so it remains officially extinct in the UK as declared in 1991.

## 2. Status and Trends

### Guernsey

1 male Natterer’s found November

### Scotland

No significant change since 2002

### United Kingdom

The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP) was established in 1996 and continues to implement effective monitoring methods to provide accurate and statistically defensible monitoring data. The main monitoring methods are: -

- a) Emergence counts (summer roosts)
- b) Counts of bats in hibernation sites
- c) Field surveys using bat detectors
- d) Sunrise return counts (first piloted in 2002)

Survey is undertaken throughout the whole of the UK and a sampling approach is taken (population trends identified within samples reflect what is occurring in the total population). The breakdown of surveys for 2003 is as follows: -

	<b>Number of sites in 2003</b>	<b>Number of Volunteers contributing in 2003</b>	<b>Number of volunteer hours in 2003</b>
Field (5 species)	340	219	4080
Colony (6 species)	639	395	4792
Hibernation (6 species)	294	64	4116
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1273</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>12988</b>

Data collected in 2003 is being analysed to produce population indices for each species in 2003.

A pilot project to evaluate a novel method for monitoring free-flying populations of bats along roads was carried out in the Republic of Ireland and funded by the Heritage Council of Ireland in 2003. Results of the project demonstrated that the developed protocol could meet IUCN Amber Alerts (25% declines over 25 years) for common and soprano pipistrelles and Leisler’s bats for the Republic of Ireland. The project can be implemented with 10 volunteers and 20 evenings of fieldwork.

A collaborative project with the Environment Agency (EA) investigated the relationship between Daubenton’s bat activity and waterbody factors identified on the EA’s River Habitat Survey and other datasets. A key finding was the highly significant, positive relationship between Daubenton’s activity and insect biodiversity, itself an indicator of water quality.

Thus annual indices of Daubenton’s bat populations can be used as an annual indicator of waterway health throughout the UK.

The project also evaluated the cost/benefits of using more sophisticated bat detectors on the Daubenton’s Waterway Project. Recording from these sophisticated detectors can be found analysed post-survey via sonogram analysis. Results showed that an additional 6 species could be incorporated on the project using these detectors but the cost of sonogram analysis

was beyond the present resources of the NBMP. In addition the project compared identification of pipistrelle bats between volunteers with standard detectors and post survey sonogram analysis. The results showed that volunteers, when they identified a pipistrelle to species, had a greater than 95% identification rate compared with sonogram analysis. However sonogram analysis increased the total number of bats identified through reducing the number of unidentified bat recordings.

#### Jersey, Channel Islands

The status of all recorded local species is as follows:

Species		Status 2003
Greater Horseshoe	Rhinolophus ferrumequinum	Last recorded 1959
Natter's bat	Myotis nattereri	Uncommon resident
Grey long-eared	Plecotus austriacus	Relatively common resident
Brown long-eared	Plecotus auritus	Two individuals recorded 2002 and 2003
Species		Status 2003
Common pipistrelle	Pipistellus pipistellus	Very common resident
	Pipistellus pygmaeus	Relatively common resident
Nathusius' pipistrelle	Pipistellus nathusii	Relatively common resident
Kuhl's pipistrelle	Pipistellus kuhli	Uncommon resident
Serotine	Eptesicus serotinus	Unknown, believed uncommon resident
Leisler's bat	Nyctalus leisleri	One male individual recorded 20.5.02. Believed to be a vagrant

Two new resident species of bats, the brown long-eared bat and Kuhl's pipistrelle, have been confirmed, whilst the two phonic types of pipistrelle (common and soprano) have been recorded. The grey long-eared bats were also found to be more widespread than previously thought and are probable under represented in detector surveys due to their quiet calls. The resident status of Nathusius' pipistrelle was established although breeding roosts have yet to be identified. Natterer's bat was found to be the only Myoti bat on the Island but it appears more widespread than previously thought. A Leisler's bat was found in 2002 and though to be a vagrant individual whilst the status of a suspected Serotine colony remains unconfirmed.

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

#### Isle of Man

A new roost of Natterer's Bats was found in a suburban house.

#### Scotland

There is no evidence of significant changes in bat habitat and roost sites since the last report. Following the EBLV incident in November 2002, there was concern about a possible subsequent public backlash against bats and an increase in requests for advice on exclusion of bat colonies from domestic dwellings. While there have been a few cases where rabies was cited as a reason for exclusion, the issue does not appear to have resulted in a dramatic negative change in the public's level of tolerance towards bats and the prediction of a dramatic increase in requests to exclude bats has fortunately not been realised.

A large roost of Daubenton's bats (*Myotis daubentonii*) with possible in excess of 200 bats was reported in a house in Sutherland. This is very close to the northern limit of this species' distribution in the UK

#### Forestry

Work has begun on a purpose built 90m long Y-shaped hibernaculum in East Anglia Forest District. Several other hibernacula in this district have had improvement work carried out. The total number of boxes in this district has been increased to 654.

A new bridge on a mountain bike trail in Ae Forest District has had roosting holes incorporated into the concrete supports at the time of construction. Ae have also blocked off the entrances to an existing tunnel to create another hibernation and roosting site. CCTV has been installed in the South Scotland Territorial Office to allow the public to view a colony of pipistrelle bats.

The total number of bat boxes in Buchan Forest District has been increased to 90.

North York Moors Forest District are continuing to trial a new type of flatter bat box, working with Dr. John Altringham of Leeds University, with 50 planned for this year.

The total number of bat boxes in Sherwood and Lincs Forest District is 180, with plans for another 110.

#### Jersey, Channel Islands

The State of Jersey Environment Department (ED) is responsible for administering the Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2000, which applies protection to all species of bats and their roosts. The ED scrutinises development applications and identifies existing or new roost sites through surveys at the application stage. In the last two years, this has led to the preservation of 12 previously unidentified roost sites that otherwise would have been lost to development. The ED and various local NGOs carry out habitat protection. A large-scale woodland management regime and hedgerow restoration scheme has been underway to help preserve local flagship species, the red squirrel. Measures taken for squirrels are also considered to be equally beneficial to bat populations, for example the planting of 35,000 hedgerow trees to increase woodland connectivity. These artificial hibernacula were created from pillboxes in a key local wood in 2003, the success of these will be monitored.

#### United Kingdom

Paston Barn, Norfolk – The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) continues to be on the management committee for Paston Barn, an all year round roosting site for barbastelles and a SAC. Essential work had to be undertaken to the barn in 2003, whilst at the same time safeguarding the bats roosting places. Work has been done to the guttering, doors, walls and a wing of the barn. Monitoring of Paston Barn's barbastelle colony continues and a count of 56 adults and juveniles made at the end of July is the highest recorded since 1999.

Bently Barn, Suffolk – This is home to six species of bats, including barbastelles and a large roost of Daubenton's bats (of regional, and possibly national importance). The owner is considering its future. English Nature gave clear advice that the barn was unlikely to get a licence for development due to the bats. BCT commissioned and organised a survey to establish the feasibility of the barn being managed as a bat "haven". Results of this survey revealed that considerable resources are required to stabilise the barn.

The BCT, with funding from the Mammals Trust UK, is working with Dr Sue Swift to develop best practice in artificial bat boxes. The project is evaluating current bat box models for their potential use by bats. The evaluation of artificially heated luxury bat houses continues from previous years and pipistrelle bats have been recorded in 2 out of the 3 "houses" erected in 2003.

Many of the 95 bat groups in the UK and Eire (most of which are affiliated to BCT) undertake habitat management of roost monitoring/creation. A small sample includes: -

- Bats and the Crab & Winkle Line (hibernation site enhancement [Kent Bat Group])
- Bridge assessment for bat roosts prior to maintenance (Kent Bat Group and Kent County Council)
- Bat boxes at Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Foulshaw Reserve (Cumbria Bat Group)

- Barbastelle monitoring at Old Wimpole, Maulden Wood, Old Warden, Chicksands Wood, Swiss Garden (Cambs and Beds Bat Group)
- Bat Box trailing at Milton Country Park (Cambridgeshire Bat Group)
- Fountains Abbey hibernation site monitoring (North Yorkshire Bat Group)
- Bat Boxes at Thursley National Nature Reserve (Surrey Bat Group)
- Bats & the Millennium Link – monitoring project over waterways (Central Scotland Bat Group)
- Bats at Birkhill Caverns – monitoring project at swarming site (Central Scotland Bat Group)
- Bat Boxes at High Limerigg – setting up of boxes in Scots Pine forest (Central Scotland Bat Group)
- Village Bat Roosts Questionnaire Survey – to identify news roosts (Derbyshire Bat Group)
- Coggeshall Bunkers – roosts enhancement (Essex Bat Group)
- Highgate Wood Tunnels – roosts enhancement (London Bat Group)
- Brick Kiln, Northaw – roost enhancement (Hants & Middlesex Bat Group)
- Lime Kilns near Betchworth – roost enhancement/maintenance (Surrey Bat Group)
- Ice House – roost enhancement/maintenance (Cambridge Bat Group)

Most of the locally run projects reported in last year's Eurobats report were also continued in 2003. Much of this work is funded by individuals and bat groups, and also by SNCOs government agencies, lottery funding, Mammals Trust UK and other charitable trusts, corporate sponsors and BCT members. BCT has a Bat Support Fund with which it provides financial help to local bat conservation projects.

Habitats and roost sites are also identified by way of monitoring returns to the NBMP. These are summarised under 5 below.

#### **4. Threats**

##### Isle of Man

Bat protection is an issue that has been adopted by local residents, resulting in two recent planning inquiries. One development, to build houses in a pastures surrounded by mature trees, was passed and a later visit showed that the site is still used by bats following development. The field boundaries and trees were retained and the developing gardens are likely to enhance the habitat. Another proposal, to develop small woodland for housing, adjacent to a bat roost, was turned down. Also, permission to build a house on a woodland, streamside glade used by feeding brown long-eared bats was refused, partly due to bat interest of the site. The planning system has proved to be a useful and fair approach to these issues.

Since the Manx bat protection legislation was introduced in 1990, there had been no licensed bat exclusions. However, this honeymoon period was broken for the first time this year, with an exclusion from a house with Natterer's and Pipistrelles. The household had accepted the bats whilst an interested child lived there, but when the child left they requested an exclusion. The press coverage of rabies may have contributed, though the owner said that it was not the issue.

##### Scotland

Loss of roosts and foraging habitat combined with habitat fragmentation are still considered to be the major threats to bats in Scotland. A few cases involving killing of bats and/or unauthorised exclusion of colonies from buildings are reported to Scottish Natural Heritage each year. These probably represent a small fraction of the actual number of such incidents that occur.

### Jersey, Channel Islands

Bat activity was shown to be strongly associated with linear landscape elements such as hedgerow and streams. To some degree, the small parcel size and network of hedgerows can favour the small species of bats found locally, but concern in some areas, is the lack of hedgerow connections resulting in woodland patch fragmentation. Furthermore intensive agricultural practices and water quality issues are likely to have negative effects on bat populations and therefore the threat to local populations must not be underestimated. The loss of roost sites is considered the most significant threat since there have been many planning application for the refurbishment of old buildings, particularly granite barn and farmhouse conversion for new housing developments.

### United Kingdom

Main threats to bat conservation in 2003 identified by BCT were: -

- Building demolition
- Building alterations (e.g. soffit/fascia board replacement, re-roofing, extensions)
- Bridge maintenance works
- Tree works
- Barn Conversions
- Household roost exclusions

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

### Isle of Man

Jenny Dunn, a student of Leeds University, studied the comparative distribution of foraging habitats of the common and soprano pipistrelles on the island, as part of her undergraduate degree. The results are expected in 2004.

The pond and dub research has been extended with a survey of water beetles in the north of island. In addition to the invertebrate interest discovered, this will help in the assessment of sites for nature conservation.

2003 was a quiet year for bat carers on the island, with very few bats handed in for treatment. Reports from other bat workers suggest that quite the opposite situation occurred in England.

### Scotland

Scottish Natural Heritage now has a fully functional centralised bat roost database, which will greatly facilitate the analysis, interpretation and dissemination of information on bats and their roosts throughout Scotland.

### Forestry

Forest Research will be presenting a poster on bat conservation work within the Forestry Commission (based on information gathered for this annual survey) at the September conference: Managing Trees and Woodlands as Habitat for Bats. Copies of this poster will also be sent back to the contributing Forest District.

### Jersey, Channel Islands

Following the publication and dissemination of the results of the baseline survey, a Species Action Plan for local bats has been developed. Habitat management initiatives have been detailed and run in tandem with the existing programme to de-fragment and diversify woodland habitat for red squirrels. A monitoring programme has been designed and will be implemented in 2004 onwards as part of an Environmental Monitoring Strategy.

### United Kingdom

The NBMP monitoring methods are given in 2 above. Sites are monitored over most of the UK. The data returned for those sites gives an indication of trends for the whole of the UK.

Consistent monitoring of the same sites needs to continue over several years if annual declines of <2% are to be identified; larger declines can be monitored over a shorter time period.

NBMP holds datasets on monitoring surveys in a relational ACCESS database for over 2,000 UK sites. Power analysis on existing data provided guidance on the number of survey sites required in meeting government targets for each species/survey. For example, to identify annual declines of 1.14% on the lesser horseshoe colony monitoring project, power analysis predicted that at least 100 colonies counted for 13 years is required based on present survey methodologies.

In 2003, two newsletters were produced specifically for volunteers (available from the BCT website [www.bats.org.uk/nbmp](http://www.bats.org.uk/nbmp) or as a hard copy from the office) that feed back analysis and interpretation of data to volunteers who sent it in.

The NBMP has involved many volunteers in active bat conservation. Eighteen NBMP bat detector workshops have been held throughout 2003; this helps ensure a high quality of data is returned. The need to increase the number of workshops given by the NBMP in order to meet high demand was addressed in 2003. This involved NBMP running a Training Workshop to which three carefully selected individuals were invited. Those invited expressed an interest and were capable of delivering Heterodyne Detector Workshops on behalf of NBMP within their regions. Two of those trained ran their own detector workshops in 2003; using the training resources BCT developed specially for trainers, and trained 21 volunteers in use of heterodyne detectors.

Species monitored, monitoring methods employed and number of sites surveyed in 2003 and since survey inception (total network) for each selected species are shown in the table below. It refers only to sites where species are present unless otherwise indicated.

	HIBERNATION COUNTS		ROOST COUNTS		FIELD SURVEY	
	2003	Total Network	2003	Total Network	2003	Total Network
Greater horseshoe	31	66	0	0	0	0
Lesser horseshoe	84	133	41	184	0	0
Daubenton's	87	150	0	0	*187	*862
Natterer's	108	179	42	54	0	0
Whiskered	7	20	0	0	0	0
Serotine	0	4	38	82	*153	*480
Noctule	0	2	0	0	*153	*480
Common pipistrelle	0	0	0	0	*153	*480
Soprano pipistrelle	0	0	0	0	*153	*480
<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp	6	23	316	829	0	0
Brown long-eared	77	170	49	64	0	0

\* Sites surveyed (including sites where species surveyed for but absent)

In 2003 the main funder of the NBMP were the JNCC and the Environment Agency.

The Species Protection Database was updated until March 2003 as part of the BCT/RSPB Bat Investigation Project. Data was collected on prosecution and potential offences against bats for the apprehension and prosecution of offenders. Further details are in 6 below.

BCT assists 95 bat groups. Many of these groups undertake their own survey and monitoring in addition to the NBMP. Much of this data feeds into NBN, LRCs and into the land use planning process in order to safeguard roosts and habitats.



## **C: MEASURES TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE III TO THE AGREEMENT**

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

#### Guernsey

The island government has approved in principle, a draft proposal for animal welfare legislation, which will provide comprehensive bat protection. This is expected to become law in 2005

#### Scotland

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Bill, as drafted, proposes to introduce the concept of 'recklessness' in relation to offences concerning protected species such as bats.

The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 has provided a number of measures designed to strengthen the existing enforcement legislation concerning wildlife crime, including the introduction of custodial sentences for offences against bats and other protected species.

#### Jersey, Channel Islands

Procedures are in place for the enforcement of the Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2000. Known roost is held on a register in the Geographical Information Systems for cross-referencing planning applications and a successful process for identifying potential roosts has been developed. Once a roost is identified the Department assesses the extent of the threat to the population concerned and either provides recommendation for a refusal or suggests statutory mitigation advice. These screening processes combined with the appropriate statutory mitigation measures and follow up with architects, builders and contractors has led to the protection of 12 (p being previously unknown) roosts in 2003 that previously would have lost to development.

#### Northern Ireland

568 enquires about bats in dwelling houses were received. In 43 cases guidance on means of exclusion was provided. 2 Licences to allow for repairs to buildings and development were issued.

#### United Kingdom

As well as the Habitats Regulations (which transposed the European Habitats Directive into UK law), the UK 's bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by CroW 2000. The closing of the loophole by CroW has been useful in taking incidents forward (see below). It also requires minister and Government departments to have regard to the conservation of biological diversity in the course of their functions. The Act requires England and Wales to publish lists of priority species and habitats and to take steps, or promote the taking of steps by others, to further the conservation of the listed species and habitats.

BCT remains lead partners for four bat BAPs (pipistrelle, lesser horseshoe, Bechstein's and barbastelle) under the UK Government's Biodiversity Strategy. It is responsible for taking a lead in the steering groups for implementation of the Action Plan.

In March and August the BCT Barbastelle and Bechstein's Technical Advisory Group met. One of the main items coming out of this was that a leaflet is needed giving information about habitat management for barbastelles; this will be pursued further. Additionally, the NBMP is to pilot a large-scale survey for barbastelles, subject to funding being obtained.

#### **BCT/RSPB BAT INVESTIGATIONS PROJECT**

This ran between April 2001 and March 2003. Many bat groups have pledged money for a three-year period to enable this project to recommence, and BCT is still trying to obtain

further funding to make the project viable. In the interim, RSPB kindly agreed to continue supporting bat investigation work by monitoring and giving advice.

Between January and March 2003 the number of bat incidents began to rise after the inevitable quiet winter period, and several requests for Police Wildlife Crime Officer training had been received.

There was a formal caution in Staffordshire following removal of the roof of a barn before a bat survey in order to avoid the “complications” that finding a bat roost may have imposed on the developer. The bat worker contracted to undertake the survey located the roost even after removal of the roof.

A report “ Bat Crime – is the legislation protecting bats?” was written at the end of the project in March. It’s findings were as follows: -

144 offences were identified in the two years of the Project. The causes of the offences were as follows: -

Building and development work	67%
Tree surgery and felling	9%
Deliberate exclusion	9%
Disturbance	6%
Other	9%*

\* (Use of electronic repellents, Misuse of bat licences, Vandalism, Cavity wall insulation, Quarry work, Wasp nest treatment and Sale of a dead bat)

Over two thirds of the offences are committed by the building profession. This identifies the need to influence the building profession in order to prevent offences occurring. Offences were identified as: -

Damage or destruction of a roost	80%
Disturbance of bats at the roost	10%
Exclusion or obstruction of a roost	7%
Disturbance of bats away from the roost	1%
Possession of a bat	1%
Sale of a bat	1%

The fact that most of the offences involved the damage or destruction of a roost is very worrying for bat conservation, as the impact then is on local populations rather than individual bats.

Of the 129 offences passed to the police, 71 incidents resulted in enforcement action. Of these, 24 offences were dealt with by way of advice, 33 were dealt with by the police issuing verbal or written warnings, 6 offences resulted in cautions and 8 resulted in prosecution. Of the 8 prosecutions, 2 were unsuccessful and 6 successful, resulting in a total of £2,600 in fines and £455 costs.

The report resulted in much press coverage and interest, including national TV and radio. The report has also led to an upsurge in interest and effort from the police, including the planning of specialist bat training for officers. There has been a large increase in bat groups and police working in partnership, and licensed bat workers training their local police in bat issues. Several of the recommendations in “Bat Crime” are already being actioned and bats are to become priority species for investigating Wildlife Crime.

700 copies of the report were sent to police and key contacts (prosecutors, legal journals, DEFRA, ect). A further 400 copies have been sent out on demand to bat groups, police (for

training) and others, and it has been downloaded 663 times from the website between August and December.

In 2002 Defra, SE and NAW consulted publicly on whether derogations under the Habitats Regulations for land use planning proposals should be considered as part of the planning decision-making process at the local level. BCT responded formally (see 2002 Report) and is awaiting a formal decision on those consultations. The outcome of these consultations is important in identifying further direction for BCT's training resource, particularly in light of the results of the Bat Investigations Project detailed above.

Defra consulted publicly on the Government's regulatory proposal for ensuring full transposition of the Habitats Directive. BCT responded formally to this and the results of the consultation are awaited.

Review of Planning Policy Guidance Note 9 that guides land use planners in decision-making in England where nature conservation issues are concerned, is awaited. BCT has been involved with Wildlife & Countryside Link in drawing up and sending Defra and ODPM an outline of what the new PPG (PPS) should contain. Subsequently a meeting was held with Defra. Again, the outcome if this is important, particularly in light of the Bat Investigations Project results.

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

Up to the end of 2003, the UK has submitted 26 candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) to the European Commission, under the provisions of the EC Habitats Directive, with bats listed as an interest feature. In total, 8 sites have been submitted for bechsteins, 7 for barbastelle, 13 for lesser horseshoe and 11 for greater horseshoe bats.

During 2003, one new site was submitted as a cSAC for its bat interest whilst an additional nine sites were re-submitted on account of their new or upgraded bat interest.

### Northern Ireland

No further ASSIs or SACs have been designated for their bat interests.

### England

The site submitted as a cSAC in 2003 was at Singleton and Cocking Tunnels SSSI, where barbastelle and bechstein are listed as interest features. English Nature notified or extended four sites as SSSIs for bats, three of which have subsequently (January 2004) been submitted as cSACs (Bridlesford Copses for bechsteins, Eversden and Wimpole Woods for barbastelle, and Mottisfont Bats for barbastelle). The fourth site, an extension to Ebernoe Common SSI, was notified for barbastelle and bechsteins, and is also being considered for possible submission as a cSAC. Apart from the possible cSAC extension at Ebernoe Common, site provision in the UK under the Habitats Directive is now complete for bat species.

### Wales

In Wales, five new SSSIs were notified for their bat interests in 2003 (Coedydd Beddgelert a Cheunant Aberglaslyn, Coedydd Dyffryn Ffestiniog (Gogleddol), Glaslyn, Mwyngloddia Wnion a Eglwys Sant Marc and Mwyngloddiau Llanfrothen). There was also one extension to an existing SSSI, to include bat interests, at Glynllifon.

### Scotland

There are no SSSIs or cSACs in Scotland where bats are part of the notified interest of the site.

### Jersey, Channel Islands

Two key woodland sites are proposed SSSIs – St Catherine’s Wood and St Peter’s Valley which should be designated in 2004. No sites have yet been designated purely on their value for bats.

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

### National England

No major changes in Countryside Stewardship (CS) or Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) agri-environment scheme prescriptions or actions within the time specified.

### Regional England

South West Region:

#### Devon

- 12 new CS agreements with management tailored towards Greater Horseshoe Bats (one of these sites also supports Brown Long-eared Bats); principally involving management of pastures and hedgerows.
- 1 new agreement with management tailored towards Lesser Horseshoe Bats, Brown Long-eared and Pipistrelles – involving woodland management and grassland management.
- 1 new agreement with management tailored towards Barbastelle Bats – involving management of riparian woodland and trees, creation of wildflower margins on arable land adjacent to woodland and hedgerows in increase moth biomass, hedgerow management, creation of scrub edge next to woodland, pond creation.

#### Cornwall

- 5 new agreements with management tailored towards Greater Horseshoe Bats – principally involving management of pastures and hedgerows and creation of grass margins alongside woodland. (One of these sites also supports Brown Long-eared Bats and Pipistrelles).

#### Dorset

- 2 new agreements with management tailored towards Greater Horseshoe Bats – involving pasture management.

East Midlands:

#### Lincolnshire

- An old railway tunnel SSSI on a holding entered into CS in 2003 is a roost for bats. Surrounding grassland and arable reversion included in the agreement will provide useful feeding ground.

#### Nottinghamshire

- Work on hedge restoration, conservation headlands and beetle bank is being carried out on a farm adjacent to a large NT property with many bats. One of the objectives of this agreement, set up in 2003, was to restore and improve habitats (e.g. the hedgerows) especially for the bats.
- At least 7 new agreements mention bats, associating them with wet grassland, species-rich hedges, and ancient woodlands. A breeding colony of bats has been discovered on a 2003 CS agreement entered for orchard restoration.

West Midlands:

- A site on the banks of River Severn near Montford Bridge, Shropshire has Noctule and Pipistrelle bats recorded.

- Lesser Horseshoe bats are recorded at a National Trust estate near Worcestershire, entered into CS during 2003.

#### East Region:

- A small farm adjacent to a Barbastelle breeding colony on the North Norfolk coast entered CS agreement during 2003. The agreement has been specifically tailored to meet the requirements of the bats (although all works are based on wide-ranging conservation techniques). It includes field margins managed for nectar sources, hedge planting, and pond work. Margins will be managed in an invertebrate-friendly way, and dead wood/trees etc. retained.

#### Isle of Man

The planning system is changing from an island plan with additional, detailed village plans, to four island area plans. A planning designation, Areas of Ecological Interest, will be included, protecting many of the wilder areas and woodland. Hedgerows are frequently retained within development proposals and small fields with hedge banks have been retained across much of the island.

The Department of Trade and Industry is planning extensive health and safety works to close mines to the public. Close liaison with DAFF from an early stage is ensuring that shafts and adits, which are open, are grilled, not closed in, to allow access to bats.

A Manx Bat Group representative attends the meetings of the Manx Rivers Improvement Association, an organisation that aims to improve the environment in and around the rivers of the Isle of Man, with benefits for fishing, wildlife and amenity. Bat interest is therefore taken into account in management proposals.

#### Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland there are five distinct areas that have, since 1993, been designated as ESAs. The five areas total 221,000 hectares of agricultural land, representing 20% of Northern Ireland's total land area. More than 4,500 farmers are currently entered into a 10-year agreement with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, representing 165,470 hectares of land under agreement. The Countryside Management Scheme is essentially the same scheme but was set up to encourage farmers outside the designated ESA's to positively manage habitats and since 2001 some 2,500 farmers have entered Countryside Management Scheme agreements.

#### Scotland

No change since the last report

#### Jersey, Channel Islands

Artificial summer roosts and winter hibernacula have been provided for bats in three critical woodland habitats and were sponsored by local business and an environmental charity. Hedgerow planting and woodland management initiatives have been developed to be included as part of a proposed Agri-environment scheme. These have been developed in sympathy with the needs of local bat species and a launch date is under review but hoped to late 2004.

#### United Kingdom

The Barbastelle and Bechstein's Bat Technical Advisory Group continues with BCT acting as secretariat. It met twice in 2003.

The Caves and Underground Sites Focus Group met for the first time in Birmingham in November. Representative from BCT, EN, National Caving association and other relevant experts attended. The group discussed the issues relating to bats and underground sites, and looked at actions that could form part of the BCT's 5-year plan.

BCT's annual BAP Steering Group Meeting was also held in November. Representatives from other organisations commented on progress so far, and looked at priorities for 2004. Priorities were discussed and endorsed by the group.

See also 3 above.

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

### Regional England

#### South West Region:

- Consultation and liaison with EN Greater Horseshoe Bat project officer about CSS applications within sustenance zone of Greater Horseshoe Bats.
- 4RDS staff from Devon attended presentations from English Nature about the results of recent radio-tracking work on Greater Horseshoe Bats to identify key foraging areas used by bats from two maternity roosts in Devon.
- Advice provided by RDS ecologists to Pos about requirements of individual species and habitat management to tailor management in new agreements.
- Advice provided by RDS ecologists internally to technical staff and building specialists about the need for bat surveys prior to restoration of traditional farm buildings.
- Dartmoor ESA Pos attended a training course on wildlife in buildings.
- Requirements of bars included in training provided to Devon CSS Pos about Parkland and Veteran trees.
- Members of Wildlife Management team attended one day training course about Bats, Biology and Licensing with a view to carrying out future compliance monitoring visits for licenses issued by Defra (European Wildlife Division).

#### West Midlands:

- One regional ecologist has attended a course run by the Bat Conservation Trust on the subject of bat surveys using a 'heterodyne' detector.

#### East Region:

- A one-day training course on mammals included a section on bats and agri-environment schemes.

#### South East Regions:

- RDS Project Officers, Advisers and Ecologists attended a one-day training course on bats, organised by the Hampshire Wildlife Trust.

### Scotland

A new edition of the free Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) booklet 'Bats and People' was published in April. A free advisory leaflet 'Bats and Human Health' was published jointly by the Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health following the human EBLV case in 2002. SNH has also been working closely with key interest groups who are considered likely to come into close contact with bats as a result of their activities. These include: fly-fishermen, bird ringers, countryside rangers and roofing/building workers. The Scottish Executive has also contacted the professional body representing taxidermists.

SNH provides the majority of funding for the Bats Conservation Trust's Scottish Bat Officer, who was appointed in June 2003. This officer is responsible for promoting conservation in Scotland, increasing public awareness of bats, providing training and supporting Scottish bat groups.

### Forestry

Bat walks; talks and visits are carried out in several Forest Districts each year.

### English Nature

*Focus on Bats* booklet republished. This publication has been in production since 1981 and more than 60,000 copies have been produced.

### Jersey, Channel Islands

Targeted information on the Wildlife Law has been developed and 434 local companies associated with the building trade were provided with information on their statutory obligations in relation to bats. Routes of communication and training for authorised officers have been established with the States of Jersey Police. Training needs for the relevant planning staff (e.g. historic building officers) has been identified and is being addressed. Procedures and guidelines are in place to cope with the extremely unlikely event of contact with a diseased bat. However, adopting the precautionary principle, those involved with rehabilitating sick bats or rescuing grounded bats have consulted, appraised of best practice guidelines and advised pre-exposure vaccine has been provided for the relevant governmental and NGO personnel

### Northern Ireland

EHS continues to give financial support to the Northern Ireland Bat Group (£566 for the period of this report), and fund an advisor post in the Ulster Museum who spends 75% of their time dealing with bat related issues (£27,611 for the reporting period).

### United Kingdom

The Local Groups Development Officer (funded by SNCOs and charitable trusts) continues to work closely with the 95 bat groups across the UK and Eire. In 2003 the Bat Group Forum met in January, May and August. The Forum facilitates communication between bat groups, BCT and the SNCOs. Representative from all over the UK attend the Forum meetings and include bat group regional representatives, SNCO representatives, key wildlife organisation representatives, BCT staff and Trustees.

In June a Scottish Bat Officer was employed for the first time. She is based in Stirling and covers Scottish bat groups; she has been involved in training and supporting volunteers to enable them to carry out their work. She is also a point of contact for the Scottish media with respect to bats, which has been important since the death of a bat worker in November 2002 from EBL. Awareness of bats has been raised in Scotland since her appointment, with over 50 events held for European Bat Night in Scotland (see below). The Scottish Bat Officer is funded by SNH and Mammal Trust UK and managed by BCT.

Leaflet/Publication produced/updated by BCT include: -

- Species leaflets
- Bats in Bridges (professional support series)
- Bats in Churches
- Injured bats form
- Bats and Cats leaflet
- Bat related enquires (contracted by SNH, with respect to rabies issue)
- Good practice guidelines (in association with BREs above, handling bats w.r.t rabies issues)
- Treatment of Bat casualties for Veterinary Surgeons (professional support series)
- Notes for Bat carers (professional support series)
- What to do if you find a bat in your house
- Young Batworker
- Bat News

- Bat monitoring post (incorporating Bat Group Roundup)

All publications have been sent and are still available to bat groups for distribution to bat workers, the public or professionals. Young Batworker and Bat News were both published 4 times in 2003. Bat Monitoring Post was published twice.

Three new bat groups established in 2003 – two in Scotland, one in England. Individual help and advice was also given to others in Wales, Scotland and England by telephone, email and letter.

There were meetings with the following bat groups and Regions: -

- All Scottish bat groups, Perth, February (3 members of staff attended)
- Welsh bat group forum, Aberystwyth, March (2 members of staff attended)
- North West Region bat groups, Preston, March (1 member of staff attended)
- South West Region bat groups, Taunton, April (1 member of staff attended)
- North West Region bat groups, Preston, May (2 members of staff attended)
- West Midland Region bat groups, Shrewsbury, June (1 member of staff attended)
- London bat group, London (2 members of staff attended)
- Cardiff bat group, Cardiff (1 member of staff attended)
- Surrey bat group, Surrey (1 member of staff attended)
- South East Scotland Region bat groups (1 member of staff attended)
- Perth bat group, October (1 member of staff attended)
- Angus and Dundee bat group, October (1 member of staff attended)

BCT organised three conferences this year: -

- The annual BCT conference, York, 29-31st August, 272 delegates
- The fourth annual Scottish Bat Conference, Perth, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 110 delegates
- The first Welsh Bat Workers' Event, Llandrindod Wells, 6<sup>th</sup> December 95 delegates (we hope the Welsh Event will also be run annually).

Training and training meetings are covered separately under 11.

In 2003 seven mail outs were sent to all 95-bat groups, Forum Representatives and BCT Trustees. They were also emailed out to over 300 bat workers directly. The mailings contained a range of advice and information, including legislation changes, European Bat Night, insurance, rabies, vaccinations, bat handling, information for professionals, bat related crime, requests for bat roost records and Health & Safety issues.

BCT still has £5 million Third Party insurance for its associated bat groups. Association to BCT is available to groups for an annual fee, with concessionary rates also available.

BCT attend/supported a number of events in order to promote bats, including: -

- Lesser horseshoe roost CCTV room launch, Cornwall Monkey Sanctuary, July
- European Bat Weekend – over 100 events all over the UK and Eire, August (BCT held an event in London on this weekend to promote bats). Resources and publicity provided by BCT (43 events in 2002, 33 events in 2001). Events ranged from walks and talks, to bat box making, barbeques and slide shows.
- Kent County Show – over 5,000 people visited the Bat Stand, July
- Aberdeen Bat Group Family Event, October
- Wildlife Crime training event, Chatelherault Country Park, Scotland, November
- Pest Tech, Birmingham, event for professionals, November

HELPLINE AND RABIES



The BCT National Bat Helpline calls doubled in peak bat season in 2003 due to the increased awareness of bats through the bats and rabies issue and a general increase in interest as a whole. In July calls averaged 53 per working day (compared with 34 and 23 in 2002 and 2001 respectively). Calls take varying times to deal with – complicated bat bite calls (relatively rare – 14 last season) can take more than 1 day of staff time. Professionals from many industries continue to use the Helpline; most commonly calls relate to grounded and injured bats, bats in roofs and planning and development matters. Large proportions continue to be associated with bat survey where changes in land use/development are concerned. Thanks to the informed and measured way that the rabies incident was handled by SNCOs, government agencies and bat workers, the risks of rabies from bats was put in perspective. Defra supported the BCT Helpline in the last year and DoH has acknowledged the public health role the Helpline plays and will also support the service. The Helpline forms a major part of bat conservation work.

The BCT website continues to be a vital resource for the public needing information about bats. BCT is working on its design.

BCT continues to work closely with statutory agencies on rabies issues, and sits on the EBL Liaison Group, chaired by Defra, attended by SNCOs, HPA, DoH, Scottish, Welsh, Irish health agencies, HSE, working on a “joined up” approach for bats and rabies issues.

BCT, in conjunction with the EBL Liaison Group, has developed Good Practice Guidelines for bat workers likely to handle bats. These have been sent to all bat groups. We currently have proof from 110 bat rehabilitators that they have been vaccinated and we are awaiting proof from another 64 vaccinated workers; this pool of vaccinated bat workers is crucial to bat conservation and effective operation of the Helpline and ensuring the risks are further minimised.

BCT and volunteer bat workers have worked in collaboration with Scottish Executive, SNH and Defra on the EBL prevalence studies in Scotland and England and publicity resulting from it. Joint management of the publicity has been successful.

BCT continues to supply its’ bat workers with tubes and envelopes to enable the passive surveillance project to continue at VLA. BCT and bat workers responded to the need for more dead bats to be tested; between 1986 and 2001 about 3,000 bats in total had been sent to VLA. Since November 2004 BCT has sent out 1,063, tubes and envelopes. About 1,000 dead bats have been submitted to VLA in that time

2003 saw an increase in the number of bat stories in the media; both staff and bat workers were involved with these. A selection is as follows: -

- Bats in Churches – article and subsequent letter to The Telegraph
- New Scottish Bat Officer Post – in Scottish Daily Mirror
- European free tailed bat – Western Morning News and the Times
- Bat Watching – Woodland Trust magazine
- Bats and Trees – BASC article
- General article – Wildfowl and Wetland Trust magazine
- Numerous local paper pieces and local radio interviews

And as a result of the Sunrise Survey, Bat Night and the release of the Bat Crime Report: -

- Radio 3 interview
- Radio 4, Farming Today and Today
- Radio 5
- BBC 2, Gardeners’ World
- Frequent appearances on the BBC Nature and News website
- BBC 1 Breakfast

- BBC 1 Newsround
- BBC 1 10 o'clock news
- BBC 1 Countryfile
- Numerous local radio stations

BCT's display material has been used in many locations, including: -

- April, Cumberland Bat Group
- April, East Yorkshire Bat Group
- May, Irish Bat Conference
- May, Corporate Event, Barnes
- June, BBC Natural History Event, Lancs.
- June, Arboricultural Association Trade Fair, Hant
- June, Bedfont Lakes Country Park, London
- October, Speyside FWAG
- November, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

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

##### Scotland

No change since the last report.

##### Jersey, Channel Islands

This responsibility lies with the States of Jersey Environment Department and the completion of the baseline study had provided the information and procedures for more accurate and consistent delivery of conservation advice and management.

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

##### Scotland

Where exclusion of bat colonies from buildings is required, SNH now routinely advises the use of one-way excluder 'gates', in preference to simply blocking up access holes at times of the year when the roosts are thought to be vacated. This is in response to concerns over the continued presence of bats during the winter months in buildings that are normally used primarily as summer roosts. Evidence from more intensive recording in recent winters indicates that blocking holes during the winter months can run the risk of incarcerating bats within wall cavities.

##### United Kingdom

###### **TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

**Training Standards** – BCT has gone through both the nomination and selection process for both the training standards panel and the advisory board. The standards panel will consist of two volunteer bat workers, one professional consultant, one professional trainer, and representatives from IEEM, the SNCOs and BCT. The advisory board currently has 16 members. The Standards Panel will set standards for all areas of bat work.

Two workshops were held at the National Bat Conference to introduce the concept of Training Standards to bat workers.

**Consultants' Training Course** – BCT is now running both foundation courses and follow up modules for consultants. Demand has been high and feedback has been very positive. Five courses were run in 2003. The first pilot follow up module, "Bat Surveys: Using a Heterodyne Detector as an effective survey tool" ran successfully in October with 10 attendees. Further modules are being planned for 2004.

**Training for Trainers** – Two courses were run for trainee roost visitor trainers by BCT and EN. 24 people attended. More courses will be run in 2004.

**Fiberscope Training** – Workshops in fiberscope use were held in April (Taunton), June (London), at the York Conference and at the Welsh Bat Workers' Event. Attendees included both ecological consultants and volunteer bat workers.

**Bat Detector Training** - see under 5 above.

**Bat groups** continue to train new and experience bat workers and professionals. BCT provides resources.

**Other Training** – Consultation is in progress about courses for planners and for arborists to be held in 2004.

**12. Recent and ongoing programmes (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.**

#### Isle of Man

A Wildlife and Conservation (Grants) Scheme has been proposed but has yet to go to Tynwald, the Manx parliament. This has been designed to contribute to local initiatives, such as habitat enhancements, raising public awareness and research.

Twenty-eight farms have now joined the Agri-Environment Scheme 2002, a pilot scheme that has now closed to new applicants. A review will follow and a full scheme is planned for 2006.

#### Scotland

Considerable work in relation to EBLV2 in British bats has been undertaken in conjunction with other key UK organisations. On-going liaison between the relevant organisations has been maintained through the UK and Scottish EBL Liaison groups. In Scotland, SNH implemented a Bat Action Plan. This was coordinated and delivered by a full-time Project Manager in conjunction with a Steering Group. The Bat Action Plan provided a strategic framework for bat-related work in Scotland throughout the year and beyond. It identified key priorities for research, provision of advice, public relations/awareness and Health and Safety. SNH has also operated a 24-hour Help line service throughout the year – the only one of its type in the UK.

SNH commissioned a review of the current state of knowledge of EBLV and other lyssaviruses. The study also provided an overview of the status of Scottish bats and considered how the voluntary sector can be engaged with the Action Plan and help to further bat conservation in Scotland. This report will be made available on the SNH website [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk) in early 2004.

Another major research project has focussed on EBLV seroprevalence amongst (principally) Daubenton's bats. This pilot study used blood samples and mouth swabs from live bats and found the presence of antibodies to EBLV-2 in a number of bats. The presence of antibodies showed that some Daubenton's bats (*M. daubentonii*) have been exposed to the disease, although none of the mouth swabs examined was found to have live EBLV-2 virus. The study, in Scotland funded by SNH and the Scottish Executive, involved the development of new techniques not previously tested in the UK, and further work is now necessary to improve the scientific understanding of the preliminary findings and to inform the relationship between antibodies and the live virus. This initial pilot work has provided

platform for a longer-term, more extensive study into the incidence of EBLV2 in Scottish bats.

SNH has also contributed to a research study testing the use of heated bat boxes as a practical alternative to buildings where the presence of bats colonies is not wanted.

#### English Nature

The project to enhance the feeding areas around greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* roosts has now extended into other areas of south-west England and is being run as a partnership project with local authorities and others. An article describing the project and summarising progress to date was published in *British Wildlife* (Longley, 2003).

A new project on the ecology of the lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* was started. This project is using radio tracking to look at the foraging behaviour of this species so key foraging habitats and habitat features can be identified. The output from this work will be used to begin a habitat management project similar to the successful work of the greater horseshoe bat. The work is being carried out by Tessa Knight at Bristol University and is funded by English Nature, the Forestry Commission, Mammals Trust and the Countryside Council for Wales.

In 2001 there was a serious outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the UK, when more than 4 million animals were slaughtered. In 2002 a study was begun to investigate the effects of a reduction in grazing animals on the summer and winter diet of greater horseshoe bats and to see whether changes in the bats' diet could be detected. The work is being carried out by Dr Roger Ransome and is funded by English Nature.

#### Jersey, Channel Islands

As a result of the completion of a baseline survey Species Action Plans have been developed and distribution and abundance data are available for all local species. The survey was Government funded project and received extra grants from Action for Wildlife and the Gerard Le Claire Environmental Trust (two local NGOs). A roost and habitat-monitoring programme has been developed and will be implemented as part of a wider programme of State of the Environment Monitoring Programme in 2004.

#### United Kingdom

See also 13 below.

BCT remains lead partners for the four bat BAPs (pipistrelle, lesser horseshoe, Bechstein's and Barbastelle) under the UK Government's Biodiversity Strategy. We are responsible for taking a lead in the steering groups for implementation of the Action Plans. The eighth meeting of the BAP Steering Group took place in November 2003. The Mines and Underground Sites Focus Group met in November 2003.

BCT continues to work closely with Wildlife and Countryside Link, and represents the bat interest on the following working groups: -

- Biodiversity
- Farming and Rural Development
- Planning
- PPG9 sub group
- Woodlands

BCT attend the Biodiversity Strategy for England Local and Regional Action Meetings. The main emphasis was to discuss method of ensuring community strategies incorporate biodiversity. Out of this meeting will come a publication aimed at Local Strategic Partnerships and local authorities informing them of the relevance of biodiversity in all areas of the community – social and economic.

BCT was involved with a number of projects in 2003 (in addition to those mentioned under 3 and elsewhere in this report).

- Modified Hibernacula Project (funded by Peoples' Trust for Endangered Species) – further work to be undertaken
- Role of the voluntary sector in the SNH Draft Action Plan for Bats (in conjunction with Aberdeen University, funded by SNH) – completed
- Protocols and Scenarios for Bat Helpline Officers (in light of human death from EBL) (funded by SNH) – completed
- BCT co-authored a chapter on Buildings for a habitat management book for CIWEM

### **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**

#### England

The Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS) is operated by the four agriculture departments and is coordinated by the Pesticides Safety Directorate. Although there are some local differences in detail, the basic operation of the Scheme is the same throughout the UK. Field investigations are carried out into cases where it is suspected pesticides have affected wildlife, *post mortem* examinations of casualties are undertaken and samples analysed for pesticide residues. The results of these enquires are used in reviews of the conditions of approval of the pesticides concerned. If there is evidence of illegal use (whether a deliberate attempt to poison wildlife or an unapproved method of use against the proper target species), this may lead to prosecution or other enforcement action. During 2003 there were no incidents reported involving bats.

The Environmental Panel Subgroup (part of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides) on Wider Biodiversity is considering issues related to pesticides and biodiversity. As part of this assessment, they will examine those none target species including bats, which are associated with agriculture, and determine whether they need to be considered in an appropriate risk assessment.

#### Scotland

When consulted over proposed timber treatment in bat roosts, SNH continues to advise the use of only those compounds that have been approved for use as such, i.e. permethrin/cypermethrin or boron-based compounds. A list of approved products is available and periodically updated.

#### Jersey, Channel Islands

Standing advice continues to be issued on the use of approved timber treatment pesticides for use in bat roosts. This work is ongoing and forms part of the standing statutory advice in relation to bats.

#### United Kingdom

##### **AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE AND BATS PROJECT**

A review of current research literature and management recommendations was carried out by CABI Bioscience for BCT. The study collated scientific and agri-environment scheme literature focusing on: -

- Bats in agricultural areas
- Aerial insects and changes in their abundance and diversity with habitat management on agricultural land
- The impact of agricultural changes on insectivorous bird species that have feeding or habitat requirements in common with bats.

The executive summary can be viewed on the BCT website. In 2004 BCT will summarise trends and conclusions of the report in order to compile a draft leaflet for farm managers and conservation advisers containing management recommendations that would benefit bats. Where information to support management recommendation is lacking BCT will identify areas where further research is required.

BCT also attended Pest Tech with a stand to give out information and resources about bats. This is a well-attended exhibition held annually in Birmingham for the pest control industry.

## **D. FUNCTIONING OF THE AGREEMENT**

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

#### England

Defra initiated and funded a project entitled Bat Conservation in Eastern Europe in 2002, but due to unforeseen circumstances this project has been extended into 2003 to meet its original objective. The aim of the project is to set-up the framework for effective national bat conservation and monitoring programmes in two countries in Eastern Europe (Romania and Moldova), in consultation with local and international experts, under the Agreement on the Conservation of populations of European Bats.

The objectives of the project are: -

- Information gathering: carry out skills/needs analysis for bat conservation and monitoring
- Action planning: enable the development of an agreed national action plan for bat conservation and monitoring
- Implementation: provide appropriate resources to commence implementation of the national action plan, e.g. equipment, expert training, and advice
- To share experience and knowledge with European colleagues who have expressed an interest in adopting the monitoring protocols and techniques with a view to setting up a pan-European monitoring initiative.

The project is being undertaken by BCT on behalf of Defra.

#### Scotland

SNH was represented at the Eurobats meeting in Bulgaria and continues to liaise with relevant workers in other Range States, as necessary, particularly in respect of EBLV studies.

#### Jersey, Channel Islands

Jersey continues to collaborate with acknowledged 'experts' and the relevant organisations (such as the BCT) in the UK to ensure that practices and advice is the most up to date and accurate.

#### United Kingdom

**EASTERN EUROPEAN BAT CONSERVATION PROJECT (with funding from Defra)**

The programme for Romania has been fully implemented. The project included a strategy meeting followed by two workshops on bat detecting and approaches to bat monitoring. Delegates from Germany, the Netherlands, UK, Romania, Ukraine, Slovenia, Belgium attended a two-day workshop in June in the Carpathian Mountains, Romania. Talks were given on techniques for monitoring and recording bats in underground sites during winter. The pros and cons of various survey techniques were discussed. Talks were given on involvement of volunteers in bat monitoring programmes from various delegates and discussions on developing a strategy for bat conservation in Romania. Site visits to bat caves were carried out in the evening along with bat detector training.

The outcome include a Romanian Bat Strategy signed by bat experts throughout Romania and a Romanian Bat Monitoring Programme modelled on the UK's National Bat Monitoring Programme. Romania now has a first stage network of volunteers who take part in the Monitoring Programme; the Romanian Bat Protection Association delivers the Programme.

The Project for Moldova has produced a first draft of a Bat Strategy for the country and a website. The next stage, which included delivery of training, will take place in early Spring 2004.

A full progress report will be submitted to Eurobats Secretariat and Defra in May 2004.

France – September 2003. A bat-monitoring workshop was held by BCT to enable the sharing of knowledge and the identification of good practice – a need defined under Resolution. A BCT member supported the cost of the workshop including travel of delegates. Eight countries were represented and bat detector survey and monitoring techniques were discussed.

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

### Scotland

None identified.

### Jersey, Channel Islands

None identified.