Agreement on the conservation of populations of European bats

National Implementation Report of Ukraine

2009 / AC14

A. General Information

Name of Party:	Ukraine
Date of Report:	April 2009
Period covered:	June 2006 – April 2009
Competent Authority:	Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine: Directorate of Biotic Resources and EcoNet Fauna Conservation Division
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B. Status of bats within the territory of party

1. Summary details of Resident Species

No changes since the last report (June 2006).

2. Status and Trends

Although quite considerable massif of new data about bat fauna of not studied earlier regions was received since 2006 a general “picture” concerning distribution and abundance of bat species in Ukraine is the same to that reflected in the previous report.

3. Habitats and Roost Sites

The situation is similar to June 2006.

4. Threats

Threats determined earlier are still present. Among main ones there are: disturbance in roosts (up to full removing and killing by humans); exclusion from roosts (for overground shelters); loss of roosts (including recreational mastering of underground cavities, so called sanitation felling and cleaning cutting); downfall during migration (including downfall in different anthropogenic traps). As well a negative attitude to bats from side of humans is still common. An impact of chemical pollution of the environment (including pesticides) on bats in Ukraine is still unclear.

5. Data Collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination

A geography of bat investigations continues to broaden. New data (including data from poorly known regions in terms of bat fauna) had been collected. That allows to clarify details of status and distribution of bat species in Ukraine. A work on elaboration of appropriate approaches for keeping bats in captivity (for their rehabilitation) is carried out. Working out of “proper” methodology of dendrophilous bat species monitoring (basing on original field data) is going on.

Results of bat research carried out by Ukrainian zoologists are reflected in publications and conference/seminar scientific and education presentations.

C. Measures taken to implement Article III of the Agreement

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

No changes since the last report.

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

The list of important habitats is replenished with new sites. Underground cavities, defined as important for bats, in Southern Ukraine (namely in Odesa, Mykolayiv and Kherson provinces) were added to the list. Inclusion of important forest plots and overground roosts together with some determined important hunting areas into the list is almost complete.

8. Consideration given to habitats which are important to bats

The situation is generally similar to June 2006. Initial measures (already revealed to be effective) on conservation of newly identified key bat sites concern mostly official familiarizing of responsible authorities about their new status and inadmissibility of activities which may lead to worsening of conditions vital for bats.

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

Since 2006 tens of interviews to mass-media (TV, news-papers, radio) about bats and necessity of their conservation were given by Ukrainian bat workers and bat conservationalists. As consideration of the Law of Ukraine "On adoption of an amendment to the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe" in Ukrainian Parliament caused a big resonance in public a special press-conference was convened by bat-workers in Kiev in February 2009. The press-conference was entirely devoted to bat conservation issues.

For raising public awareness of local people and speleologists for the necessity of bat conservation few posters, leaflets, and many pocket calendars calling people to be friendly to bats were issued and distributed.

Other activities include special lectures for different groups (broad public, speleologists, spelestologists, students, etc.), excursions, keeping of bat web-site (kazhan.org.ua) and opened question lines (both e-mail and telephone ones).

10. Responsible bodies, nominated for the provision of advise on bat conservation and management

Scientific Advisory Council on the Conservation of Bats at the Ministry of Environment Protection of Ukraine. Contact persons: Dr. Lena Godlevska, Dr. Volodymyr Domashlinets, Dr. Igor Zagorodniuk.

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11. Addition action undertaken to safeguard population of bats

The situation is similar to the last report (in 2006). The Centre of Bat Rehabilitation at the Kiev Zoo continues to work.

12. Recent and ongoing programmes relating to the conservation and management of bats

Include both small-budget projects and initiatives which have no any financial support but carried out by Ukrainian bat workers for a more or less long time on continuing basis and characterized by quite definite results.

Finished:

"Key sites for cave dwelling bats of Podillya and Dniester River region" (2006–2007). The project was supported by DEFRA through the EUROBATS Secretariat (project's leader: L. Godlevska). An overall aim was, basing on results of field census and estimation of current status of regional bat populations, to determine important bat sites of the region for their further protection and monitoring. The first scaled bat census was carried out both in summer and winter seasons. 53 underground units (limestone, chalk and phosphorite mines, natural caves and grottoes, sacral and fortification cavities) were examined. Most of them were checked by bat-workers for the first time. Based on received results 10 globally important for conservation and monitoring of bats key sites were determined — 4 natural caves and 6 complexes of exhausted mines. In 2007 project executors initiated an implementation of some practical measures for the conservation of the sites. Regional and local authorities were officially informed about uniqueness and significance of the cavities and necessity of their direct protection. At the same time, all sites were included into the Ukrainian national list of key underground bat sites. Description and coordinates of the sites were transmitted to EUROBATS Secretariat for including them into European general list of important bat sites. In 2007–2008, due to implemented initial conservation measures and active position of local authorities, demolition of two of the determined underground key bat sites was prevented.

More information is available at http://kazhan.org.ua/eng/projects/pr_podil.htm.

"Role of bat hibernation sites in deep rock crevices for their conservation on the territory without natural caves, North-Eastern Ukraine" (2006–2007). The project was supported by BCI Student Research Scholarship Program (executor: A. Vlaschenko). As it follows from the title the work was devoted to search of hibernation sites in crevices of outcrops of geological rocks.

"Kharkov Bat Education Programme" (2007–2008). Supported by BCI's Global Grassroots Conservation Fund (team leader: A. Naglov). The project aimed to change public opinion about bats to friendly side in Kharkov region, and to raise awareness of people about necessity of bat conservation. A special emphasis was given to distribution of information about ways of secure interactions with bats (to limit a number of bat bites

accidents). The project represents the first, large, systematic bat-education programme in Eastern Ukraine. In the framework of the project 3 colorful posters, 2 leaflets and many pocket calendars had been produced and distributed. Lectures in schools were given.

Project "Key sites for cave-dwelling bats of the continental south of Ukraine" (2008). The project was supported by "Direction des Eaux et Forêts" (Luxembourg) and "Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety" (Germany) through the EUROBATS Secretariat (2008; project's leader: L. Godlevska). The project is follow-up one to "Key sites for cave dwelling bats of Podillya and Dniester River region". As with previous one an overall aim is to determine important bat sites of the target region for their further protection and monitoring. Totally, 60 points were examined (exhausted and active limestone mines (majority of objects), military underground objects, cellars). Most of objects were examined for the purpose of bat census firstly. Most of the bat records represent an essential addition on status and distribution of revealed bat species in Ukraine, generally. Based on census results, six underground cavities or their complexes, which are highly important for bats, were determined. In 2009 executors started an implementation of some initial practical measures on conservation of determined important underground sites

Details are at http://kazhan.org.ua/eng/projects/pr_south.htm.

Ongoing:

"Development of collaboration between bat workers and public healthy authorities: implementation for bat conservation in Ukraine" (2009). The project is supported by Ministère de l'Écologie, de l'Énergie, du Développement durable et de l'Aménagement du territoire (MEEDDAT), France; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), UK; and EUROBATS Secretariat. An overall aim is to improve bat conservation in Ukraine by distribution of knowledge about bats and necessity of their protection through public health authorities and development of collaboration between them and zoologists both at level of ministries and at level of individual experts from each "side". A big attention is paid to implementation of EUROBATS Resolution 5.2. The central point of the project is a two-days workshop ("Bats and man: conservation and epidemiological aspects"). The workshop will gather both bat-experts, veterinarians, rabiolologists and representatives of healthy authorities of Ukraine.

"Rare fauna of Eastern Ukraine" (2006–2009). Internal Luhansk University project (main executor: I. Zagorodniuk). The project aims, mainly, with inventory of rare mammal, including bat, species of Eastern Ukraine. Detailed cadastres and distribution maps were already compiled for 12 bat species.

Bats of Gomolsha forests (Gomolshanskie lesa)" (1999–2009). Ten years bat research work (leader and main researcher Dr. A. Vlaschenko). The Gomolsha woodland, with the total square of about 10000 ha, represents a relatively old oak forest massif located on the right high bank of the Seversky Donets river. Bats had been studied here since 1915. Unfortunately in the beginning of the 1950s bat research was stopped there. In 1999 the bat research in Gomalsha forests was renewed by A. Vlaschenko. The main objectives of his work are: to study summer bat assemblage in oak forests (numbers, distribution, dynamics), to develop a system of bat monitoring for forest territories, to study characteristics of bat tree roosts for further, etc. One of the work realized goals is popularization of bats among students during summer student field practise carried out at the biostation situated in borders of the woodland.

"Bat research in the Chernobyl exclusion zone" (2003–2008; project leaders: S. Gaschak and A. Vlaschenko). The work deals with few objectives: determination of bat species composition, relative diversity, distribution of bats, sex and age composition, patterns of usage of the region by different species; and determination of total content of ^{90}Sr and ^{137}Cs in the animal body, and dependence of these indices on different factors.

More information is available at http://kazhan.org.ua/eng/projects/pr_chernob.htm.

"Bat census in underground cavities of Western Podillya" (2008–2009). Main executor:

M. Drebet. Works on search of new underground habitats in the region and bat census in them are carried out. A number of unknown earlier sites with large winter bat aggregations have been already found. Bat census in few discovered and known sites is carried out by monitoring system.

"Responsible forest management for sustainable development — model forest areas in Romania and Bulgaria and building capacity in the Ukraine". Supported by WWF-DCP (2005–2008; expert on mammals and habitats: I. Zagorodniuk). A big attention was given to bats and their conservation. Bats were determined as one of key group of mammals in estimation of forest value. Clear criteria on revelation and protection of bat habitats for Ukrainian forestries are proposed. A final report book "High conservation value forests toolkit. A practical guide for Ukraine" will be printed and distributed through Ukrainian foresrties soon.

Started:

"Kharkov center of bat rehabilitation". Combined initiative of Kharkov National University and Kharkov Zoo (leader of the initiative Dr. A. Vlaschenko).
A phenomenon of bat migration in Kharkov city is recorded by local zoologists from year to year, that includes mass invasions of bats into inner chambers of few buildings in the city. During migration period groups of up to 100 bats often attempt to penetrate through windows to university rooms. Because of windows' design many bats become trapped between frames, where they may die. The initiative group tries to save these bats whenever possible, but its resources are limited. Besides, in the city there are records of bats (both single and groups) lost their shelters in winter.
The initiative group had started an establishment of the center (with permanent workers and volunteers) at the base of Kharkov Zoo for rehabilitation bats after urban-traps and for keeping "lost" animals in winter with following releasing in spring. The centre will be similar to Kiev one and, thus, will become the second bat rehabilitation center in Ukraine. According to estimations of the group's leader the center may help up to few hundreds of bats yearly.

13. Consideration being given to the potential effect of pesticides on bats, and efforts to replace timber treatment chemicals, which are highly toxic to bats

No consideration has been given.

D. Functioning of the Agreement

14. Co-operation with other Range States

The ongoing project "Development of collaboration between bat workers and public healthy authorities: implementation for bat conservation in Ukraine" is realized under cooperation with the Netherlands. Translation of the EUROBATS publication "Protecting and managing underground sites for bats" (Mitchell-Jones et al., 2007) into Russian was done under Russian-Ukrainian cooperation. Joint Polish-Ukrainian field expeditions were carried out. Besides, there is a collaboration of Ukrainian bat-workers with specialists from many EUROBATS Range States in the field of information exchange.

15. Measures taken to implement Resolution adopted by Meeting of Parties

Resolution 3.7, Resolution 4.8 and Resolution 5.3. A Law of Ukraine No. 1007-VI "On adoption of an amendment to the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe" (which covered amendments of pointed resolutions 3.7, 4.8 and 5.3) was adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on 18.02.2009.

Resolution 2.4 and Resolution 4.3 (underground bats sites). The work on initial systematic survey of potential underground bat sites for the determination of key ones for further protection and monitoring is going on. During the report period firstly two big “white” regions of Ukraine were investigated for the main purpose of discovery of important bat underground sites. For defined ones a number of initial conservation steps were undertaken (see p. 12). All of newly found important bat sites were included into national list of important bat habitats. The work on implementation of effective conservation measures on these sites is going on.

Resolution 2.4 and Resolution 4.4 (bat conservation and forest management). First case on preventing of destroying of important woodland bat habitat had taken place (in Eastern Ukraine) due to the direct application on the procedure provided by national Ukrainian legislation. For now Scientific Advisory Council on the Conservation of Bats at the Ministry of Environment Protection of Ukraine works at elaboration of the national list of important bat forest habitats.

Recently Ukraine has started to work on the realizing new steps toward implementation of Resolution 5.2 (bats and rabies; see p. 12: ongoing projects).