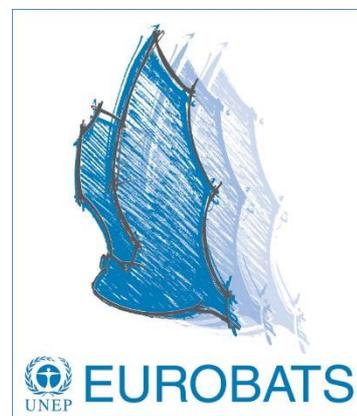


18th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Videoconference, 16 September 2021

Report of the Chair of the Advisory Committee



The 25th Meeting of the Advisory Committee took place on 30 April 2021 as a videoconference. The meeting was attended by 103 participants from 44 countries, the IUCN, as well as several NGOs.

In the weeks preceding AC25, eight of the Intersessional Working Groups (IWG) convened via videoconference to advance their work. The other eight IWGs gave progress reports during AC25. Below are the summaries of their activities.

Groups that formally convened online before the AC plenary (eight IWGs):

1. Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health

The members of the IWG continued to call out errors in the press where they found them. However, over the lifetime of this activity, more worrying were the errors in scientific literature. The group would be monitoring and responding to scientific papers that were accepted by journals but contained false information.

2. Evaluation Criteria for Assessment Reports Concerning Bats

The IWG discussed a draft for the criteria list based on an annex available in the guideline document of Thuringia that was provisionally translated into English. The IWG found that this document could be adapted for the scope of its work. The members were asked to provide their feedback so that the version could be further developed and tailored for the purposes of the IWG. The IWG also planned to prepare a draft resolution for the adoption of this criteria list at the following MoP.

3. Bats and Light Pollution

The need to translate the guidelines (EUROBATS Publication Series No.8) into other languages such as Spanish and French was emphasised. It was agreed that a new questionnaire would be developed and circulated for collating more information on the situation in different countries. A draft of the questionnaire was being prepared and would

be sent to the IWG members in due course. It was suggested that the EUROBATS Secretariat should approach the EU Environment for the implementation of the guidelines during the Green Public Procurement procedure.

4. Education

The IWG decided to draft a script and directions for the video recording to be sent to the EUROBATS country representatives, who should then produce a short video of 30-40 seconds. The IWG would then combine these videoclips into an educational video.

5. Monitoring and Indicators

The IWG discussed three topics during its meeting:

- Advances on the questionnaire to be circulated among the range states;
- Possible intersection of work and tasks with the COST Action project;
- Status quo of the guidelines update.

Quite a few questionnaires with information on current monitoring schemes as well as on suitable techniques for bat monitoring schemes were collected from different countries, some of which were received shortly before AC25 and could not be included in the written report of the IWG. Additionally, a preliminary analysis of the information was done, and initial plots were prepared to be further discussed with the rest of the IWG members in the upcoming meetings. Regarding the update of the guidelines, a draft was distributed among the members as a google document. The members of the sub-groups were then given the opportunity to work on the draft and the progress made was to be discussed by mid-May 2021. In June 2021, the following steps were planned to be discussed, since previously the work mainly focused on chapters 2 and 3. The attention of the AC participants was also drawn to the appendices, which contained a lot of valuable information.

6. Bats and Climate Change

The group agreed to circulate a new questionnaire, as well as to collect the relevant literature and distribute the information about it by google drive. The analysis of the questionnaire responses would be used to determine possible sub-groups. The participants of the IWG meeting were also informed that they could join the ClimBats working groups at any time.

7. Ad hoc Group to Review the Methodology of Assessing the Conservation Status of Bat Species in the Article 17 Reports

The IWG met to discuss its work plan and the Terms of Reference. In accordance with target 4 of the EU-EUROBATS joint Action Plan, the group intended to analyse the open data on the European Environment Agency platform from the 2020 data set. Several points were suggested: to analyse current practices based on the data available, to make recommendations to improve practices regarding bats, to propose capacity building to improve the evaluation of conservation status, and to explore the possibility to make the input of the group more official. The IWG suggested that EUROBATS should contact the expert group for reporting under Nature Directives to establish an observer status. It was proposed that documents regarding Article 17 bat species check lists and guidelines for the next reporting period could be commented through the members of the expert group of each country if they were also members of the ad hoc group on reporting.

8. Wind Turbines and Bat Populations

The IWG decided to prepare an update of the guidelines that would be presented at MoP9. In case the final document was not ready until then, the document would be submitted for approval as an incomplete draft. During the last three years, the membership of the IWG as well as the topics changed. Detailed information on this could be obtained from the written report available as Doc.EUROBATS.25.13.

Groups that did not meet, but submitted their reports to the AC (eight IWGs):

1. IWG on Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructures

Though the IWG had not met prior to AC25, a small group continued to work on the guidelines. A poster about the publication was presented to the IENE Conference in January 2021 and a copy of that poster was sent to the Secretariat. The publication contents document was provided as a report on progress and a copy of the draft guidelines was also sent to the Secretariat prior to AC25 and made available on the EUROBATS website. The IWG was hoping to include more illustrations and case studies. The AC members were encouraged to send any case studies that could be included in the publication, or studies on mitigation methods that the IWG was not aware of. Further help was needed with editing and proof-reading the guidelines so that the document could be finalised as soon as possible.

2. IWG on Bats Rescue and Rehabilitation

The IWG was in the process of finalising the draft guidelines on Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation. The group achieved progress in its work; however, the guidelines document was not complete. As soon as it was ready, the draft would be provided to the Secretariat for further circulation among Focal Points for their approval. This should happen in the following months, so that the final version of the guidelines could be ready for MoP9.

3. IWG on Bats, Insulation and Lining Materials

Final feedback on draft guidelines had been received and the guidelines document was expected to be completed soon.

4. IWG on Insect Decline as a Threat to Bat Populations in Europe

The compilation of literature on the main topics of the IWG proceeded. Additionally, a meeting of different sub-group convenors took place and a working agenda for different topics was established. A first draft of the guidelines was expected to be distributed to all members of the group for approval before the following AC. It was pointed out that the resolution on insect decline served as a template for other resolutions – e.g., at CMS CoP13 in India a resolution on insect decline and threats to migratory insectivorous species was brought to adoption by the support of Germany, United Kingdom, Switzerland and Israel.

5. IWG on Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats

The major news to report concerned new literature as well as the publication of a recovery of a *P. nathusii* 2,200 km away from the ringing site. This was a significant new record which gained a very good coverage in the mass media. The goals of the IWG were hoped to be achieved towards the coming MoP. More details, especially on the new literature, were included in the written report of the IWG available on the EUROBATS website as Doc.EUROBATS.AC25.15.

6. IWG on Autecological Studies

The group had nothing to report.

7. IWG on Purpose-Built Man-Made Roosts

Additional information was included in the text of the Review of Purpose-built Roosts for European Bats, which was close to being finalised. However, further comments and

additions were still possible, for which purpose the Review was agreed to be placed on the EUROBATS website.

8. The ad hoc Working Group on the Amendment of the Annex to the Agreement

It was proposed to reform the group in autumn 2021 to prepare a draft resolution for AC26. Only two issues needed to be discussed. One concerned the *Myotis nattereri* group; the other the status of *Plecotus gaisleri*. The AC members were invited to share any other issues they were aware of that could affect the Annex to the Agreement. It was suggested that the newly described species *Myotis crypticus* also be included in the EUROBATS Annex, since this was already the case for the Red List of IUCN and the Red Data Book for Portugal was also being revised.