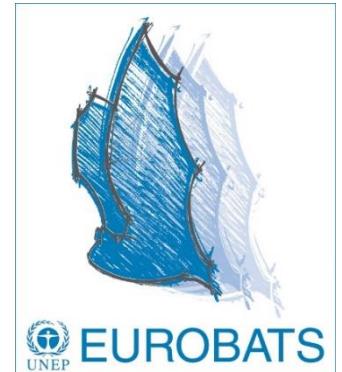


## 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

Sofia, Bulgaria, 6 June 2019

### Summary Report on the Outcomes of EPI projects conducted in 2018



#### **1. Promoting awareness and capacity building for the conservation of bats in Northwest Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia).**

The workshop organised by the Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II (IAV) was held in Rabat 2-5 July 2018. It aimed to promote awareness of decision makers and relevant stakeholders. In addition, this workshop intended to encourage wildlife biologists to expand their knowledge on advanced technologies and good practices in bat research and conservation. 50 participants attended the workshop including three Algerian scientists, one Tunisian conservationist and three French bat workers. The Moroccan participants were stakeholders (Haut Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et à la Lutte Contre la Désertification, Ministère du Tourisme), scientists and students (Institut Scientifique, Faculté des Sciences (Rabat, Fès), IAV, Ecole Normale Forestière d'Ingénieurs, ECWP Missour), NGO members (ASMAPEC, Moroccan Explorers). The objectives of the workshop have been achieved by (1) oral presentations (A. Abiad, B. Allegrini, S. Aulagnier, T. Dieuleveut, E. Sehar) on bat biology and ecology, legal background and conservation initiatives, survey and monitoring methods (colonies and foraging bats), devices for roost preservation, present context of bat conservation in each country of Northwestern Africa (bat richness, distribution, legislation, conservation status and initiatives), (2) training on acoustic identification (B. Allegrini, F. Cuzin & T. Dieuleveut) and (3) general discussions for reporting on education, public events and promotion (including the International Bat Night in Algeria and Tunisia, a bilingual Tunisian leaflet), improving the dissemination of information, identifying the main threats on bat populations and listing the main measures to improve bat conservation. As the main outcome of this workshop, the final discussion resulted in a list of measures to improve general knowledge on bat populations and their conservation status.

**2. International Conference «Bats of eastern Europe: Challenges for conservation», 25-27 October 2018, Erevan, Armenia,**

While the Eastern Europe outside the EU and Schengen countries comprises up to three quarters of modern ranges for many European bat species, an influx of fresh data (both conference papers and journal articles) from this vast region is rather modest, with the majority of studies published in Russian and, therefore, barely accessible for foreign scientific communities. Consequently, there is an apparent lack of communication between former USSR countries, which, despite current political differences and conflicts, share common research approaches based on the unified scholastic practice of the Soviet past. To tackle this issue, the organisers aimed to bring together most active bat researchers and conservationists from these countries with the primary goal to resuscitate dialog and mutual trust, and develop common priorities and agenda for future research during our conference. Several scientists were invited, and all costs were covered (tickets, ground transportation, accommodation, per diem, post conference tour) for conference participation from post USSR countries. The conference hosted 45 participants from 12 countries: Russia, Georgia, Lithuania, UK, The Netherlands, Germany, Belarus, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Armenia. Abstracts are available at <http://armbat.org/download/AbstractBook.pdf>

**3. Migration in European bat populations: Estimating genetic relationships between French and Spanish populations of the endangered Greater noctule bat. The project will be completed in 2019.**

This project is a specific part of a larger project whose aim is to increase knowledge on the French populations of *Nyctalus lasiopterus*, as required by EUROBATS MoP7 Resolution 7.12 on Priority Species for Autecological Studies and by the 3rd French Action Plan for Bats. The discovery of *Nyctalus lasiopterus* male roosts in the vicinity of maternity roosts in the Massif Central, France, raised the question of transboundary migration. Few females are found in northern Spain and they appear mainly in the autumn. Do males and females from France cross over the Pyrenees?

To investigate the relationships between the French and the Spanish populations of the Greater Noctule Bat we plan to collect saliva swabs or biopsies from captured individuals (adults and flying juveniles) for DNA analysis. The aim of the present project is to study the gene flow between the different populations in order to establish

if the mountain range built a barrier for the Greater Noctule. The DNA extracted could possibly allow to investigate the parentage of the sampled individuals in different population nuclei and confirm migration. The partner Laboratory of Molecular Ecology (LEM-EBD) in Seville enjoys a high reputation within the scientific community for its phylogenetic competencies and its knowledge of *Nyctalus lasiopterus*. Its researchers have already investigated the relationships between the Spanish populations of this species and have the necessary sequences to compare with the French colonies. Their work will consist in teaching and assist a Master II student how to extract DNA from the samples, amplify mitochondrial and microsatellite markers, provide sequencing for all samples and analyse the results.