

Dear all,

Welcome to the second BatLife Europe Information bulletin.

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1. Trustees

In December 2011 Suren Gazaryan from the Russian Bat Group was elected as the 14th and final BatLife Europe Trustee.

The trustees are having monthly meetings via 'GoToMeeting', web conferencing software. After some initial problems with the technology (Skype didn't work with the increased number of trustees) we have now held 3 successful trustee meetings via 'GoToMeeting.'

2. Partner Organisations

We currently have 28 BatLife Europe partners in 26 countries.

- **Austria:** Austrian Coordination Centre for Bat Conservation and Research
- **Belgium:** Plecotus – Natagora Working Group
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Speleological Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Czech Republic:** Czech Bat Conservation Trust (CESON)
- **Egypt:** Nature Conservation Egypt
- **Estonia:** Suurkõrv
- **Finland:** Chiropterological Society of Finland
- **France:** French Mammal Society (SFEPM)
- **Germany:** Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU);Stiftung Fledermaus
- **Hungary:** Nature Foundation
- **Ireland:** Bat Conservation Ireland
- **Italy:** Italian Mammal Society
- **Lithuania:** Lithuanian Society for Bat Conservation
- **Macedonia:** Bird Study and Protection Society of Macedonia
- **Netherlands:** Dutch Mammal Society
- **Norway:** Norwegian Zoological Society (NZF)
- **Poland:** Polish Society for Nature Conservation (Salamandra)

- **Romania:** Romanian Bat Protection Association
- **Russian Federation:** Russian Bat Research Group
- **Serbia:** Wildlife Conservation Society "Mustela"
- **Slovak Republic:** Slovak Bat Conservation Society
- **Slovenia:** Slovenian Association for Bat Research and Conservation (SDPVN)
- **Spain:** Spanish Association for the Study and Conservation of Bats (SECEMU)
- **Switzerland:** Centre for Coordination (west) for the Study and Protection of Bats
- **UK:** Bat Conservation Trust; The Vincent Wildlife Trust
- **Ukraine:** Ukrainian Centre for Bat Protection

We are still working to expand the partnership to include more European organisations.

Please forward this link to any NGOs you think may be interested in joining:-

<http://www.batlife-europe.info/get-involved>

Support with membership fees – from a “twinning” scheme

For NGOs that cannot afford the minimum 100 Euros membership fee BatLife Europe will try to offer a “twinning” scheme. These schemes will aim to pair that NGO with a larger NGO willing to pay their membership fee. Please contact us for further information.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

The trustees have decided that only NGOs should be able to become partners in BatLife Europe. However, we plan to develop other ways to work with non-NGOs soon.

3. Activities

Fundraising

Rufford Foundation grant for capacity building BatLife Europe

BatLife Europe aims to step change bat conservation across Europe and beyond, by capacity building NGOs, sharing knowledge and speaking up for bats and addressing national and international conservation issues. We are delighted to have secured a grant from the Rufford Foundation, via the Bat Conservation Trust, for new work towards achieving this step change. The funding will enable BatLife Europe to consult with partner NGOs about:

- how we share knowledge and experience across our partnership
- regional priorities for bat conservation and special threats to bats in different parts of Europe
- how we speak up on internationally important issues in Europe and surrounding countries.

From the success of the launch of BatLife Europe, with 28 partner NGOs now members, it is clear that there is interest from a whole range of NGOs in countries across Europe. Bat conservation efforts are many and varied across Europe, including some countries with no specific bat NGO, to others with active NGOs participating in a full range of bat science, monitoring, conservation and education programmes. We are developing a work plan for the first three years of BatLife Europe (see section 6 of this bulletin). Key priorities include capacity building and sharing knowledge across the partnership, as well as influencing policy internationally. The first step towards these goals is to gather information about what each partner NGO currently does, gaps in their work, what they see

as bat conservation priorities in their country/region and what opportunities there are for sharing knowledge and experience (e.g. through twinning/exchange visits). Also to find out what the situation is in countries which have not yet joined BatLife Europe and how we can build NGO capacity in these countries. Through BatLife Europe, our partner NGOs and Eurobats we have access to huge amounts of expertise and knowledge and we are already getting offers of help, however we need an effective way for pairing up requests for help with those offering help.

The Rufford Foundation are funding BCT to employ, and second to BatLife Europe, a Project Manager, for 20 days between June 2012 and February 2013, to:

- gather a picture of overall activity of bat conservation NGOs and gaps in activity (geographical and by key areas of work).
- consult BatLife Partner NGOs about the priorities and special threats to bats they see for their country/region, so BatLife Europe can be the international voice for bat conservation and can spearhead change
- identify opportunities to share knowledge and experience across the BatLife Europe network

As part of this work, BatLife Europe trustees will also consult other international organisations to ensure BatLife Europe complements other initiatives (Birdlife, Eurobats, members of the European Habitats Forum eg Planta Europa, Butterfly Conservation, etc).

The Project Manager will work closely with:

- BCT's Partnerships Officer, bringing to the project BCT's expertise in working in partnership with the UK local bat group network. BCT has developed an effective partnership working model which will be valuable in informing the development of European partnership working.
- BatLife Europe Administrator, Hannah Rawnsley. Hannah's role is to communicate with BatLife partner NGOs and trustees and administer BatLife Europe's work. She works in this role 1 day a week, from BCT's office.

Timetable: We will share information about the project at the Eurobats Advisory Committee meeting 14-17 May 2012 in Dublin and start consulting partner NGOs in the summer. The final report will be in March 2013.

The outcome of this work will be a clear picture of:

- priorities and conservation issues of international concern; for BatLife Europe to take these forward at an international level such as through the European Habitats Network and Eurobats Agreement, and to raise directly with national governments.
- capacity building needs/asks (eg training needs, access to best practice guidance) and gaps in activity and offers of help; from which BatLife Europe can then prioritise capacity building work and enable member NGOs to directly support each other, share knowledge and expertise.

We hope that a further outcome will also be greater engagement for BatLife Europe's NGO partner NGOs in our work.

Pan European indicator project

Biodiversity indicators provide summary messages for government and the public and are important measures of progress in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and European Biodiversity Strategy. In 2012, BCT, Dutch Mammal Society, Statistics Netherlands and BatLife Europe worked together on an exciting international project to develop a prototype European biodiversity indicator using bat population data. The work was commissioned by the European Environment Agency, in order to increase the coverage of species groups in SEBI indicator 01 'Trends

in abundance and distribution of selected species' (<http://biodiversity-chm.eea.europa.eu/information/indicator/F1090245995>)

With the help of the EUROBATS Inter-sessional Working Group on Bat Monitoring and Indicators and data providers partners in UK, Netherlands, Latvia, Hungary, Germany (Bavaria, Thuringia), Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia and Portugal the project gathered new information on European bat monitoring efforts and brought together ten monitoring schemes from nine countries to share data.

Representatives from seven of the countries came to a two day workshop at the Dutch Mammal Society's offices in Nijmegen to be trained in the statistical techniques and contribute to the development of the indicator. For some countries, this training enabled national population trends to be produced for the first time. EEA plan to publish our work in their technical report series and we hope this prototype indicator will be adopted and expanded to incorporate more countries and species swiftly. The availability of a prototype European indicator and European species trends provides context for interpretation of national trends and raises the profile of bats internationally

EU LIFE + funds.

The European Commission are planning to introduce changes in their LIFE + projects funding, which will reduce the chance of NGOs being able to apply for these funds. Changes may mean that NGOs would be unable to employ part time staff. This would evidently be a big problem for many NGOs and for employing seasonal field staff. The changes also mean that VAT would not be covered by the grants.

Birdlife, WWF and other NGOs are currently campaigning about this. BatLife Europe has signed up to this campaign.

Support for National areas of concern

We have written letters to the Bulgarian Ministry regarding the disturbance to hibernating bats in Devetashkata Cave, through filming of the movie - The Expendables 2.

Bat Workers Manuals

We are in the process of developing a reference list for Bat Workers Manuals which will appear on the BatLife Europe website.

Bat Box Conference

BatLife Europe is one of the co-organisers of the upcoming Bat Box Conference organised by VLEN (Dutch Bat Workgroup).

If you would like to notify BatLife Europe partners of bat conferences and events in your country please send us details. We will include these in future bulletins and on the website.

4. Range of States

The trustees have agreed that BatLife Europe will cover the same range states as the EUROBATS agreement. Please see a list attached of BatLife Europe's range of states.

5. Key Trustee Decisions

3 year work plan

A main focus of recent Trustee meetings has been BatLife Europe's 3 year plan.

Initially BatLife Europe will rely on partners to establish projects and activities, until funds have been raised for projects with staff.

BatLife Europe's main aims are:-

- Facilitate international communication and knowledge sharing
- Identify European conservation priorities
- Develop pan-European projects
- Fundraise for international projects
- Develop best practice guidelines
- Assist in capacity building
- Provide support and technical advice for EUROBATS initiatives
- Co-ordinate action in relation to special threats
- Collect / manage data
- Assist national bodies in developing / implementing national conservation plans / strategies
- Give international status to national NGOs
- Provide international support for national matters of concern

Trustees have agreed a plan for BatLife Europe's priorities in the first 3 years as follows. We will be consulting BatLife Europe partners about this plan and their priorities in 2012/13:-

1. BatLife Europe Priorities	Priorities – First year 2011/12	Priorities – Years 2-3 2013, 2014
1. Facilitate international communication and knowledge sharing	1.1 e-bulletins (2-4/yr) 1.2 Annual report (web-based)	1.1 Quarterly e-bulletins 1.3 Share information on partners' activities (via web) Annual electronic survey of partners activities? 1.4 Partnership Meeting 2014 at EBRS
2. Identify European conservation priorities Co-ordinate action - special threats	2.1 Consult partners on priorities and special threats	Agree priorities and special threats
3. Develop and fundraise for pan-European projects such as best practice guidelines, data collection & management	3.1 Proto-type Pan-European indicator developed. 3.2 Workshops on monitoring (eg pipistrelles and noctules) led by the Netherlands	3.1 Expand Pan-European indicator to include 15 countries (if funding for training and capacity building workshop) Regular updates to Pan-European indicator? Further countries join indicator 3.3 Monitoring lesser horseshoe bat colonies and data sharing (building on workshops in Germany) 3.4 Collation of European Bat workers manuals
4. Assist with capacity building Assist with national conservation plans Give international status to national NGOs International support for national matters of concern	4.1 Support partners on request 4.2 Fundraising for capacity building BatLife Europe and partners work	4.2 Gap filling – planning and fundraising for targeted support for countries with no bat NGO, or NGOs with low capacity 4.3 Partner NGOs –mentoring or “twinning”

6. EUROBATS

The 17th Meeting of the Advisory Committee to EUROBATS is 15-17 May, Dublin, Ireland.

Official documents:-

http://www.eurobats.org/documents/lists_of_documents/List_of_documents_AC17.htm

A number of BatLife Europe Trustees are attending including Julia Hanmer, Jasja Dekker, Christine Harbusch, Stéphane Aulagnier, Javier Juste and would welcome discussions with partner NGOs and others attending about BatLife Europe.

7. European Habitats Forum.

The European Habitats Forum assembles leading Nature conservation organisations to provide advice on the implementation and future development of EU biodiversity policy.

The EHF work is organised around thematic Working Groups to allow tackling issues of importance in a more efficient way: there are currently seven Working Groups, each led by a coordinator:

- WG1 – EU Biodiversity Strategy, Sophie Herbert (BirdLife)
- WG2 – Management of Natura 2000, Sarolta Tripolszky (EEB)
- WG3 – Financing Natura 2000, Alberto Arroyo (WWF)
- WG4 – Reporting and Monitoring, Tony Gent (SEH)
- WG5 – Invasive Alien Species, Seona Anderson (PlantaEuropa)
- WG6 – Green Infrastructure, Susie Wilks (ClientEarth)
- WG7 – Emerald Network, Friedrich Wulf (FoEE)

The BatLife Europe trustees agree that it would be very valuable to join this forum to influence European policy, provide information on changes in policy and to network with other European NGOs. We will be giving a presentation at the EHF meeting in October/November 2012. Existing EHF members will then vote on whether BatLife Europe can join.

The annual membership for BatLife Europe will be 159 Euros per year.

Further information on the European Habitats Forum, along with existing members can be found here:- <http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/usa/?50/European-Habitats-Forum>

Best wishes,

Hannah

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