

BatLife Europe – Annual report

2011/2012



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BatLife Europe – Annual report

2011/2012

BatLife Europe Trustees

Chair	Julia Hanmer	Amy Coyte
Vice-Chair	Dr. Jasja Dekker	Dr. Guido Reiter
Secretary	Dr. Abigel Szodoray-Paradi	Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen
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	Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier	Zoltan Nagy
	Dr. Christine Harbusch	Javier Juste
	Dr. Henry Schofield	Suren Gazaryan

BatLife Europe Partner Organisations

- 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)
- Georgia:** Field Researcher`s Union - CAMPESTER
- 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
- Turkey:** Boğaziçi International Speleological Society (BUMAD)
- UK:** Bat Conservation Trust; The Vincent Wildlife Trust
- Ukraine:** Ukrainian Centre for Bat Protection

Chair's Foreword

I am delighted to report on BatLife Europe's first year.

There are 45 species of bats in Europe, a remarkable fifth of our mammal species. Sadly many of these species are under threat, due to habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, development and persecution. To address these threats it is vital to build NGO capacity and influence, both at an international level and in each country.

BatLife Europe launched as a new international NGO in August 2011 at the XIIth European Bat Research Symposium (EBRS) in Vilnius, Lithuania. At this symposium, Professor Paul Racey, Chair of the IUCN Bat Specialist Group, talked about the importance of establishing NGOs to achieve a "step change" in conservation and it is exciting to see all the support we have had already, in our first year.

BatLife Europe is built from a partnership of national bat conservation NGOs. In our first year an amazing 30 NGOs have joined us from a right across Europe and bordering countries. Our partners are our strength and the sheer numbers who have joined represent an amazing opportunity to share knowledge and experience to make a difference for bats and their conservation in Europe.

Thank you so much to all our NGO partners and supporters. With your help we've achieved a great deal in our first year and have exciting plans going forward. We have listed our partners and supporters in this report, but I'd like to say a special thank you to a few here. BatLife Europe owes a great deal to three visionary people, Peter Lina, Paul Racey & Tony Hutson who saw the need for an international NGO and developed the first versions of the governing documents. Andreas Streit and everyone involved in the Eurobats Agreement have been immensely supportive. Our founding trustees from 6 of our partner NGOs have worked with me during many conference calls to agree how to establish BatLife Europe. The Rufford Foundation is funding our first capacity building project. Thank you to all of you, and everyone involved in BatLife Europe for all of your support.

Julia Hanmer
Chair

Introduction

The idea of a European NGO for bat conservation and research was first suggested by Peter Lina back in 1990 and proposed by the IUCN Bat Specialist Group in 2002 at the EBRs in Le Havre. Then in 2006, the EUROBATs 11th Advisory Committee, in Luxembourg, agreed that the work of the many European NGOs committed to bat conservation would be enhanced by Trans Boundary communication and coordination.

The Bat Conservation Trust was invited to establish BatLife Europe and accepted. In 2010 BCT united with 5 other NGOs, the Dutch Mammal Society (DMS), Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), Romanian Bat Protection Association (RBPA), Stiftung Fledermaus and Société Française pour l' Étude et la Protection des Mammifères (SFPEM) to found BatLife Europe and invite others to join them. On 23 August 2011, during Year of the Bat, BatLife Europe was launched and had the first partnership meeting at the XIIth EBRs in Vilnius, Lithuania. This annual review of BatLife Europe covers the first year since its launch, August 2011 - August 2012.

Where and how we work

BatLife Europe currently covers the same range states as the EUROBATs agreement:-

<http://www.batlifeeurope.info/webedit/uploadedfiles/All%20Files/BatLife%20Europe%20Range%20of%20States.pdf>

BatLife Europe is based in London in the same office as the Bat Conservation Trust and is currently in the progress of registering as a charity in the UK. BatLife Europe currently has one part time member of staff, BatLife Europe Administrator, Hannah Rawnsley. Hannah works for BatLife Europe for one day each week. The Bat Conservation Trust pays for 50% of this time as a contribution to BatLife Europe.

The Trustees are responsible for governing the work of BatLife Europe, setting strategic direction and reporting progress to member NGOs. They follow the procedures in the NGO's governing documents, the "Memorandum and Articles." Up to 14 Trustees are elected every three years at the Meeting of Partners, which is held to coincide with the European Bat Research Symposium. We aim for a Board of trustees with skills and experience in a range of areas including international biodiversity conservation, bat research, education, public engagement, NGO management, organizational development, finance, legal and fundraising as well as to give geographic representation across BatLife Europe's range. In 2011, 13 of the 14 trustees were elected during the first Meeting of Partners in Vilnius. Suren Gazaryan became the 14th BatLife Europe Trustee in December 2011. The BatLife Europe trustees have regular meetings via 'GoToMeeting' web conferencing software. In 2010 the founding trustees held 8 Skype meetings, January – August 2010, to set up the governing documents, invite NGOs to join and organize the launch. In 2011/12 Trustees held 9 meetings in 2011 and 4 meetings in January – August 2012.

The trustees are in the process of registering BatLife Europe as a charity in the UK.

Partner Organisations

BatLife Europe currently has 30 partner NGOs in 28 countries.

BatLife Europe follows a membership model based on that of Birdlife International's, which allows NGOs from across Europe and beyond to participate. NGOs can join BatLife Europe at any time by filling in an application which is considered by the trustees, who set the criteria for membership. The trustees have decided that only NGOs should be able to become partners in BatLife Europe. However, BatLife Europe is currently in the process of developing other ways to work with other types of organisations such as state owned museums and academic institutions.

BatLife Europe will accept more than one partner from each country where there is a number of bat conservation NGOs, so long as they work together cooperatively. However there is only one vote per country at BatLife Europe meetings. Where there is more than one partner in a country, these NGO's have to decide to either nominate a voting partner for the country or share or alternate voting rights.

Each partner organisation contributes a minimum of 100 Euros per year membership fee which contributes towards BatLife Europe's running costs. For NGOs that cannot afford the minimum 100 Euros membership fee BatLife Europe aims, where possible, to offer a "twinning" scheme. These schemes aim to pair that NGO with a larger NGO willing to pay their membership fee.

Aims and Plans

BatLife Europe's main aims are to:-

- 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

Using these aims, Trustees have agreed a plan for BatLife Europe's work, outlining what we aim to achieve in our first three years for bat conservation in Europe:

1. Communication and knowledge sharing
2. Identifying priorities for action
3. Developing projects
4. Building capacity and international support

BatLife Europe partners will be consulted about this plan and their priorities in 2012/13. The table below shows the plan and is followed by more information about BatLife Europe's 2011/12 activities:

1. BatLife Europe Priorities	Priorities – First year 2011/12	Priorities – Years 2-3 2012/13, 2013/14
1. Facilitate international communication and knowledge sharing	Set up website and poster Invite NGOs to join Launch meeting 1.1 e-bulletins to members (2-4/yr) 1.2 Annual report (web-based)	1.1 Quarterly e-bulletins 1.3 Collate and share information on partners' activities (via web) 1.4 Partnership Meeting August 2014 at EBRS
2. Identify European conservation priorities Co-ordinate action on special threats		2.1 Consult partners on priorities and special threats 2.2 Agree priorities and special threats 2.3 Join European Habitats Forum to influence European policy
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 (e.g. pipistrelles and noctules) led by the Netherlands	3.1 Expand and refine the prototype Pan-European indicator to include at least 15 countries (subject to obtaining funding for a training and capacity building workshop). Publish and promote the prototype indicator. Regularly update the Pan-European indicator and enable further countries to join. 3.3 Monitoring lesser horseshoe bat colonies and data sharing (building on workshops in Germany) 3.4 Collation of information on European Bat workers manuals for the website
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 issues of concern, on request 4.2 Fundraising for capacity building BatLife Europe and partners work	4.3 Gap filling – planning and fundraising for targeted support for countries with no bat NGO, or NGOs with low capacity 4.4 Partner NGOs –mentoring or “twinning”

Activities and Projects

European Habitats Forum

BatLife Europe is hoping to join the European Habitats Forum (EHF) in order to influence European policy, provide information on changes in policy and to network with other European NGOs. BatLife Europe will be giving a presentation at the EHF meeting in October 2012. Existing EHF members will then vote on whether BatLife Europe can join.

Capacity building of BatLife Europe

In April 2012 the Rufford Foundation offered a grant to BCT towards capacity building of BatLife Europe. 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

The Rufford Foundation is funding BCT to recruit a part time Project Manager 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 an effective international voice for bat conservation and can spearhead change
- identify opportunities to share knowledge and experience across the BatLife Europe network

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 (e.g. 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

Pan European indicator project

In 2012, BCT, Dutch Mammal Society, Statistics Netherlands and BatLife Europe worked together on an 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'. With the help of the EUROBATS Inter-sessional Working Group on Bat Monitoring and Indicators and data contributors 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.

Bat Workers Manuals

BatLife Europe is currently 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 Bat Box Conference to be held in Utrecht in October 2012 organised by VLEN (Dutch Bat Workgroup).

Bat Detective

BatLife Europe is currently contributing to Bat Detective, a Zooniverse project, coordinated by the iBats project (ZSL in partnership with BCT and others such as the Romanian Bat Protection Association). The project aims to develop an online tool which can extract bat calls from noisy sound recordings.

Financial Review

Membership

BatLife Europe currently has 30 partners in 28 countries. Each partner organisation contributes a minimum of €100 per year membership fee. In this first year BatLife Europe has collected €2460 from membership fees and has a further €1000 in membership fees pledged.

Donations.

Thank you to Madeira Fauna & Flora – Ecotourism, Biology and Conservation for their donation of €63

In the year before BatLife Europe was launched, in 2010/11, BCT invested €4,200 to develop the website and poster, and employ Hannah Rawnsley as part time administrator.

Accounts

Income and Expenditure Account: 2011/12

	€	€
<u>Income</u>		
Membership subscriptions		2,660.00
Donations		<u>63.00</u>
		<u>2,723.00</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Staff costs - BatLife Europe Administrator	2,400.00	
Web conference software – GoToMeeting	348.00	
BatLife Europe web hosting fee	<u>282.00</u>	
	<u>3030.00</u>	
Total Expenditure		<u><u>3,030.00</u></u>
Loss for the year		<u><u>-307.00</u></u>

Notes

Total cost for the BatLife Europe Administrator = €4,800. BCT contributed €2,400 towards this cost



BatLife Europe's launch - XIIth European Bat Research Symposium in Vilnius, Lithuania, 23 August 2011.