

The June 2013 edition of the BatLife Europe partners email bulletin includes:

1. New Member
2. Capacity Building Project
3. European Habitats Forum
4. Twinning
5. National Conferences

1. New member

We are pleased to announce that the 'Green Balkans' NGO in Bulgaria joined BatLife Europe at the Eurobats meeting in Sofia. They have agreed to a twinning arrangement with KFFO in Austria and have become BatLife's 31st member.

2. Capacity Building Project

Thanks to a grant from the Rufford Foundation to the Bat Conservations Trust, BatLife Europe has surveyed the capacity building needs of our member NGOs this winter. 25 of our 30 member NGOs took part. Jan Collins, an environmental consultant who works for RSK ecology, was employed to project manage this work. She developed a questionnaire to find out:

- what NGOs perceive as the priorities and barriers to bat conservations in Europe
- what activities each NGO is undertaking
- about their capacity building needs and offers of help with providing knowledge and expertise.

The result of the survey show the biggest threat to bat conservation was seen as destruction of roosts, followed by loss of foraging habitat, lack of public awareness, habitat fragmentation and forestry operations. The barriers to conservation identified by BatLife Europe members were lack of funding, lack of people to do work, lack of bat records and the political and economic situation.

It is encouraging to see recognition of these barriers in that they linked to both the areas where NGOs are asking for help and to the offers of help by sharing expertise. So 10 or more NGOs have asked for help with the following areas and others have offered help:

- Raising public awareness
- Recruiting volunteers and members
- Fundraising techniques
- Setting up monitoring programmes
- Storing, managing and extracting bat data
- Bat reserve management and roost creation
- Lobbying for change
- How to investigate cases where the law is broken for prosecution

Ideas for capacity building by sharing knowledge, skills and expertise were:

- Personal contact between NGOs
- Sharing documents and resources via websites
- Translating documents
- Online forums such as Facebook
- workshops at intentional conferences such as the Berlin Bat Meeting
- Twinning organisations
- Geographically adjacent NGOs working together

We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who took part in this questionnaire survey on behalf of their NGO. We will be circulating a report later in June once we have checked the draft report first with the people who took part.

3. European Habitats Forum

The European habitats forum (EHF) is a group of 23 international environmental NGOs working together to influence European policy on biodiversity. Members include Birdlife, WWF, EEB and Butterfly Conservation international. BatLife joined the EHF in October 2012.

The EHF holds meetings twice a year in Brussels in April and October. These last 2 days, the first day the NGOs discuss policy together and the second day they meet with staff from the European Union DG Environment to lobby on topical issues. Julia Hanmer and Jasja Dekker attend these meetings on behalf of BatLife Europe. The EHF is also represented at other meetings including:

- the member state's nature directors (minister of environment) meetings which take place every six months in the country hosting the EU presidency at that time.
- Meetings with the DG Environment Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature

The EHF also has working groups which BatLife can have 2 representatives on. These are currently:

- management of Natura 2000 sites
- Management of the emerald network
- Financing Natura 2000
- European biodiversity strategy target 2 including restoration and green infrastructure
 - No Net Loss (defining this concept)
 - Biodiversity and Agriculture
- Monitoring and reporting (with members Karen Haysom and Jasja Dekker, the convicts of the Eurobats working group on monitoring)
- There is also a group inputting into IMPEL (Implementation and enforcement of environmental law) an initiative which aims to build capacity and strengthen inspection and enforcement of environmental law

Please let Julia or Jasja know if you would like to get involved in any of these groups or to be informed of their activities.

EHF members coordinate joint letters on issues of concern. Recent examples are a letter on Common Agricultural policy reform and a letter on Forestry in Europe, to ensure new legally binding agreements are multiple functional rather than just greenwash for the forestry industry and based on the principles of suitable forest management.

4. Twinning

BatLife Europe has recently started a Twinning scheme to allow our members to support each other, financially and by exchange of knowledge and expertise. We are pleased to announce we have two twins already. These are:

- Dutch Mammal Society and Ukrainian Centre for Bat Conservation
- Austrian Coordination Centre for Bat Conservation and Research (KFFO) with Green Balkans Bulgaria

5. National Conferences

We would like to keep partners and contacts informed about the conferences and events available in our partner countries. Some conferences coming up later in the year are:

Bat Conservation Trust – 13-15th September

Booking is open for the 2013 National Bat Conference taking place from the 13 to 15 September at University of Warwick. To get your 'Early Bat' discount follow the links at:

www.bats.org.uk/pages/national_bat_conference.html

The closing date for abstracts for possible talks and workshops is the end of January. If you would like to present or lead a workshop please contact Michelle Beckett via email to:

MBeckett@bats.org.uk for more information.

Dutch Mammal Society – 26th October

Yearly meeting of bat lovers with short lectures and presentations from speakers, book sales and a time to share insights and experiences with other bat enthusiasts.

If you have anything you'd like to add to a bulletin please send details to the BatLife Europe administrator at batlifeurope@bat.org.uk