

BatLife Europe e-bulletin 4

Dear BatLife Europe follower

We've been busy here at BatLife Europe, so have much news to share with you:

1. European Bat Indicator published
2. News from the European Union
 - a. EU Bat Multi-Species Action plan
 - b. Fitness check of the Habitat's Directive
 - c. Consultation on Species and Habitat Preferences
3. International Bat Research Conference, Costa Rica
4. BatLife Europe news:
 - a. Partners
 - b. Collaborator agreements
 - c. Twitter and Facebook
5. Dates for your diary

1. European Bat Indicator published

The prototype indicator was produced in late December 2011, funded by European Environment Agency, and was a cooperation between Bat Conservation Trust, Dutch Mammal Society, Statistics Netherlands and many BatLife Europe partner organisations. EEA published the report formally in their technical report series at the end of January, and the contributing partners worked together to promote the report across Europe and to their national media to raise the profile of the indicator work, bat conservation and the importance of bat surveillance. Since it was published there have been over 200 articles written about the report. We hope this will present a good platform from which to call for and seek funding for a revision of the indicator to include many more species and countries. The full report is available here:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-bat-population-trends-2013>

2. News from the European Union

2a. EU Multi-species Bat Action Plan

<http://www.batlife-europe.info/recent-activity/>

The European Union (DG Environment) is developing a Bat Action Plan, to support the European Biodiversity Strategy. Julia represented BatLife Europe at the workshop on 18 November in Brussels with DG Environment, Ecosphere (consultants writing the plan) and

Eurobats country experts. Sadly short timescales for engagement and lack of funding to attend meant many country experts were not able to attend, however there will be an opportunity to comment in writing on a second draft of the plan in February - do get in touch via the BatLife administrator email if you would like to comment.

Overall the plan has potential to be helpful for bat conservation, especially if the actions can be attributed clearly to organisations that have the power and funding to implement them. The main danger is it will just sit on a shelf and not be implemented without a funding mechanism. So the best areas to focus on are where there is potential to influence EU and European Environment Agency spending decisions, for research and conservation grant schemes. For example:

- expanding the European indicator to include more countries and capacity building in countries which do not yet have monitoring programmes
- encouraging communication of the real facts on bats and disease and actions on member states to have joined up communication across health, vet and wildlife agencies
- encourage sharing of best practice (although the feeling at the workshop was that the action plan should focus less on guidance and more on priority action)
- highlighting evidence gaps and bat conservation research priorities for EU funding

There is also the potential to make a difference where currently different EU policies are having an adverse impact. For example the drive for insulation of buildings compared to the need to allow space in buildings for bats and protected species. Martin Celuch and Julia Hanmer have been following up with DG Environment on this point.

At the workshop Ecosphere presented a proposed set of objectives and action points and BatLife Europe have now submitted comments. We will be sent a second draft for comments soon. A final draft will be prepared in March and they aim to present this to the EC Habitat Committee in April. There may also be opportunity for a brief discussion at the Eurobats AC meeting in April. Do get in touch if you would like to see or comment

2b. Habitat's Directive Fitness Check:

As part of the REFIT agenda, the EU is carrying out a "fitness check" of the Birds and Habitat's Directive in Europe. This check will be carried out by DG Environment in 2014, reporting in 2015. While we know the Directives are fit for purpose wherever they are implemented well, this is concerning because of the political pressures from the development lobby to weaken environmental legislation. The Fitness Check will assess the performance of legislation against the following criteria:

1. **Effectiveness:** Have the objectives been met?
2. **Efficiency:** Were the costs involved justified, given the changes which have been achieved?
3. **Coherence:** Does the action complement other actions or are there contradictions?
4. **Relevance:** Is the EU action still necessary?
5. **EU Added value:** Can or could similar changes have been achieved without EU action, or did EU action make a difference?

Environmental NGOs need to work closely together to defend the Directives; to show where they are well implemented they achieve results and to highlight how to overcome issues with implementation; to avoid pressure to review the legislation or annexes (which in the current political climate will only lead to weakening); and to mobilise our supporters to vote to support environment and biodiversity issues in the May 2014 European Parliament elections. There is a low turn-out at European elections and this is an opportunity to make a difference for wildlife.

BatLife will be receiving regular updates on progress of this Fitness check from our membership of the European Habitat's Forum. Let us know if you would like more information.

No Net Loss (NNL): DG Environment is reviewing NNL measures to restore biodiversity outside of Natura 2000 protected sites. At a recently meeting, European Habitat's Forum members, including BatLife Europe pressed DG Environment for more emphasis on avoidance (in the mitigation hierarchy) and less on market mechanisms and compensation measures (biodiversity offsetting, habitat banking etc) which will not in themselves achieve European Biodiversity Strategy targets for No Net Loss and 15 % restoration by 2020.

Article 17 reporting: country reports and a database of habitats and species results are being put online, with scorecards here:

http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_17/Reports_2007/index.html

There are country summaries available online now, allowing us to prepare for a consultation in July/August 2014.

Accession countries: BatLife met with Nick Hanley, who leads the DG Environment unit on accession countries and discussed issues on building data for the Emerald Network (protected sites network outside of EU) in the West Balkans including points raised by our partner in Macedonia.

2c Consultation on Species and Habitat preferences

In January the EU/EEA held a consultation as part of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services MAES initiative. The consultation asks for habitat preferences by species for each EU biogeographic region. The information will be used for targeting advice on bats and other protected species for agriculture and forestry in future, as well as reporting on progress of implementation of the Habitat's Directive (Article 17 reporting statistics).

At BatLife Europe we felt it was important to respond to this consultation, as there were many inaccuracies in the lists the EU is using for bat habitat preferences (2010 baseline lists) with the wrong habitats down as preferences for some species. Many thanks to the following for their comments: Guido Reiter (Alpine), Eeva-Maria Kyheroinen (Boreal), Javier Juste (Mediterranean and Macronesia), Primoz Presetnik (Pannonian) and Jasja Dekker, Karen Haysom and Carol Williams (Atlantic). Also thank you very much to the SFEPM (French Mammal Society) for sharing their comments with BatLife Europe.

3. International Bat Research Conference, Costa Rica

<http://www.batlife-europe.info/recent-activity/>

Julia Hanmer attended this conference in August on behalf of BatLife Europe and writes:

“It was a privilege to be part of the largest gathering of bat workers ever (639 bat researchers and conservationists from 55 countries, including many from Europe); many thanks to Andreas Streit from Eurobats, for making my attendance possible. We heard many fascinating talks, sharing new scientific findings and also ideas for integrating research, education and conservation, and a discussion of regional networks. The week was somewhat exhausting at times, with 4 parallel sessions from 8am each day, but very enjoyable to talk to so many people who care passionately about bats. I’ve given a brief account of a few seminars below, but there were many more. To view all the abstracts visit www.ibrc2013.com/index.php

Building a Global Network for Bat Conservation: The seminar aimed to share information on the continental networks for bat conservation and I found it fascinating learning from each other. I co-chaired the seminar alongside Dave Waldien from BCI and gave a presentation about the work of BatLife Europe and Eurobats. Despite European bat workers travelling and speaking widely, there was little knowledge of how our networks in Europe work, so it was good to start to share more. And I found the work of the other networks very inspiring, including the South American network RELCOM and the new Bat Conservation Africa. I was pleased that in the discussion there was widespread enthusiasm for forming a global “network of networks” to keep in contact and to share ideas and best practice. We hope to have a meeting of the continental networks in 2015.

Education and Communication: The Education seminar included some inspiring talks from Latin America, including a very successful “bat suitcase” project by RELCOM the Latin American Network. In 2011 in Year of the Bat they sent a suitcase with bat conservation environmental education materials and a big toy bat off on its travels round the continent, visiting each country. The suitcase included a notebook for children and teachers taking part to record what they have done. It’s been so successful the suitcase is still travelling round more and more countries and there is a blog with photos of progress. Rob Mies from the Organisation for Bat Conservation, an educational non-profit (www.batconservation.org) gave a fascinating talk about “20 Years Presenting Bat Programmes: How to motivate your audience.” Karen Haysom shared BCT’s communication and education experience and in a meeting of the Education seminar speakers we shared contact details and ideas. Karen explained that BCT is working to make our education resources more accessible to international colleagues and networks (building on the BatLife Europe capacity building survey – more to come on this in our next e-bulletin).

Wind Energy: There was a seminar on wind energy sharing the latest research and methods for observing bat interactions with turbines. BCI also called a lunch of the contacts they were aware of working on Wind Turbines which Karen and I attended. We made the link to Eurobat’s wind turbines working group. I showed people the Eurobats guidelines publication

and Karen mentioned the work in progress to update this. I asked for more European contacts to be included on the list of contacts for future discussions.”

4. BatLife Europe news

4a. BatLife Europe Members

Welcome to Croatian Biospeleological Society, BatLife Europe’s newest member. We now have 33 member NGOs in 30 countries:

Austria: Austrian Coordination Centre for Bat Conservation and Research
Belgium: Plecotus – Natagora Working Group; Natuurpunt
Bulgaria: Green Balkans
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Speleological Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Croatia: Croatian Biospeleological Society
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 Chiroptera Research Group (branch of Italian Research Group)
Lithuania: Lithuanian Society for Bat Conservation
Macedonia: Bird Study and Protection Society of Macedonia
Netherlands: Dutch Mammal Society
Norway: Norwegian Zoological Society (NZF)
Romania: Romanian Bat Protection Association
Russia: Russian Bat Research Group
Poland: Polish Society for Nature Conservation (Salamandra)
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)
Ukraine: Ukrainian Centre for Bat Protection
UK: Bat Conservation Trust; Vincent Wildlife Trust

If you know of any national bat conservation NGOs in a country where we have a gap in our network of partners please do get in touch with us.

4b. Collaborator Agreement

We are interested in hearing from other organisations (eg research, museums etc) who wish to become collaborators in BatLife Europe’s work. The Collaborator Agreement is now up on our website <http://www.batlife-europe.info/get-involved/> if you have any comments or suggestions about the new agreement please email us.

4c. Facebook and Twitter

BatLife is on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/BatLifeEurope> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/BatLifeEurope> Please do like/follow us and send us your Facebook/Twitter details so we can follow you too.

5. Dates for your diary

Eurobats meetings in 2014:

The joint **Standing Committee and Advisory Committee (StC9/AC19), 7 to 10 April 2014** in Heraklion, Crete, Greece

The **7th Meeting of Parties, 15 to 17 September 2014** in Brussels, Belgium

<http://www.eurobats.org/>

1 & 2 March 2014 - 2nd European Bat Box Symposium will take place in Belgium. More news on venue, programme and booking will be released soon. There isn't a webpage for this event yet but information on the last Symposium in 2012 (including videos of the presentations) can be found at <http://symposium.vleermuiskasten.nl/>

15 & 16 March 2014 - 15th National Bat Meeting SFEPM, France

<http://www.museum-bourges.net/chauve-souris-rencontres-sfepm-81.html>

16–19 March 2014 - 3rd New Zealand bat conference in Rai Valley, in the heartland of Marlborough's remaining long-tailed bat population. The NZ Bat Conference website is now up and running <http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/bat-conference> and registrations have begun. If you want to register, download the registration form from the conference website. If you have enquiries about the conference please e-mail

batconference@forestandbird.org.nz

20 & 21 March 2014 - BCT Artificial Light and Wildlife Symposium: determining solutions for practitioners. For more information see:

http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/artificial_light_and_wildlife_symposium_determining_solutions_for_practitioners.html

28-30 March 2014 23rd National Chiropterological Conference, Poland,

Polish scholars and lovers of bats will meet at this annual festival

[More information on the Salamandra website](#)

1 – 5 September 2014 - 13th European Bat Research Symposium, Solaris Resort, Šibenik, Croatia. There isn't a website for this event but the organisers have set up a Facebook page (which can be viewed without a Facebook account) at

<https://www.facebook.com/13EBRS2014?filter=2>

5-7 September 2014 - BCT's National Bat Conference at the University of Warwick

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

Please send us other dates to include in future bulletins on our website