



ROMANIA

REPORT REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF POPULATION OF EUROPEAN BATS

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Romania with an important biodiversity, extensive areas with natural and semi-natural habitats, traditional landscapes and more than 13.000 caves hosts important bat populations. The bat species are in Western part of the country (Cefa – Bihor), Mehedinți county, Dobroudjea in South-Eastern part of Romania and in the Piatra Craiului Natural Park - Southern Carpathians.

An efficient Nature 2000 Network including the most important bat roosts and key habitats and a proper management assure a favourable conservation status to the Romanian bats populations.

The authorities involved in the implementation of the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats are the Local Environmental Protection Agencies (LEPAs) which guide the environment protection activity, monitors all natural protected areas in the counties.

Organizations providing support and expertise are „Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History and the Romanian Bat Protection Association.

1. Scientific research and monitoring

The interest in better knowing the status and trends of bat populations increased. Studies and researches were conducted during the hibernation period in the caves and in underground roosts during summer. An important data was recorded about the actual Romanian distribution and status of the bats species, data which could be an important support for species conservation.

The Habitats Directive of the EU gives new opportunities for the protection of bats in Romania, since all 13 bat species listed in the Annex II of the Directive occur in the Romanian fauna.

The Romanian Bat Protection Association (RBPA) unifies people from Romania who are interesting on bats research and bats protection, focusing on general environmental protection as well. RBPA has delivered projects about bats species research and monitoring, volunteers recruitment, public awareness and concrete conservation actions in the frame of national and international projects.

The “Emil Racoviță” Speleological Institute (ISER) conceived as a universal model for the synthetic basic research of the subterranean domain. Having a long tradition and an experienced staff (35 researches), the ISER seeks to maintain a high scientific standard and to play a leading role in Speleology. The institute cooperates with all non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in the exploration, the investigation and the inventory of the Romanian karst, achieving thus a national coordination of these specific activities. One of the main directions of research is focused on the studies on monitoring and biodiversity in karst zones and in underground networks, both natural and perturbed.

These investigations are complemented by ecological and ethological studies upon subterranean terrestrial and aquatic data, organization and function of trophic chains in karst system, dynamics of underground populations and other related topics.

RBPA and LEPAs experts participated to elaborating the Managements Plans of Nature 2000 sites where are the bats species.

The approval of *LIFE08 NAT/RO/000504* “Bat conservation in Pădurea Craiului, Bihor and Trascău Mountains”, *LIFE+* Nature and Biodiversity, co-financed by the Life Programme of the European Union allowed the ringing of bats species by a joint team of Romanian Bat Protection Association. The duration of project is 2010-2013.

The Project objectives are to ensure the long term conservation of the bat populations in the project area, to increase awareness among the general public of the ecological importance of bats and the need to protect them, to creating a network of specialists and organizations which can contribute to the long-term monitoring of bat populations in the project area. Coordinating beneficiary is the Local Environment Protection Agency of Bihor County.

The expected results are:

- management plans of seven bat species for the project area will be prepared;
- a guideline for the elaboration of management plans of underground bat roosts and surrounding habitats will be prepared, which could be used in the future at national level;
- 15 caves will be closed in a bat-friendly way, to minimize the disturbance of bat colonies;
- in the most important tourism oriented caves, measures will be taken to avoid the disturbance of bats;
- lighting conditions will be modified in three caves;
- warning sign will be placed at 40 caves in the area, to strictly prohibit the access to bat colonies located in the cave;
- 9 important underground habitats will be cleaned up from waste;

- information boards will be erected in front of 15 caves, which will show the importance of bats and the main objectives of the project;
- informative materials (books, brochures, leaflets, documentary, website) will be created, which will contribute in changing the negative attitude against bats and to disseminate the project's results;
- a network of specialists will be created in the project implementation area. This will increase the sustainability and efficiency of future bat survey, monitoring and conservation actions.

The project is implemented on the territory of 3 counties: Bihor, Cluj and Alba. The monitoring of bat species and caves, which are included in the project is realized in Bihor, Pădurea Craiului and Trascău Mountains. Undertaken actions aim to establish and implementing the best protection practices for bats and their cave habitat, which are included in Habitat Directive. All target caves from the project are included in Nature 2000 sites:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| ❖ Apuseni-Vlădeasa
Mountains and Apuseni | ❖ ROSPA0081 and
ROSCI0002 |
| ❖ Betfia | ❖ ROSCI0008 |
| ❖ Cefa Fishery – Rădvani
Forest and Cefa | ❖ ROSPA0098 and
ROSCI0025 |
| ❖ Crișul Alb | ❖ ROSCI0048 |
| ❖ Crișul Negru | ❖ ROSCI0049 |
| ❖ Crișul Repede upstream
Oradea | ❖ ROSCI0050 |
| ❖ Crișului Negru Gorge | ❖ ROSCI0061 |
| ❖ Crișului Repede Gorge –
Pădurea Craiului | ❖ ROSCI0062 |

❖ Ferice – Plai	❖ ROSCI0084
❖ Crişul Repede Lower Meadow	❖ ROSCI0104
❖ Alparea Forest	❖ ROSCI0145
❖ Goronişte Forest	❖ ROSCI0155
❖ Vaşcău Plateau	❖ ROSCI0200
❖ Tăşad	❖ ROSCI0240
❖ Trascău Mountains	❖ ROSPA0087
❖ Trascău	❖ ROSCI0253
❖ Iad Valley	❖ ROSCI0262

2. Education and public awareness

International Bat Night took place every year. National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA), Regional Environment Protection Agencies (REPAs), Local Environment Protection Agencies (LEPAs) and NGOs passed on information to the public about the way bats live and their need with exhibitions, presentations and bat walks, offering the opportunity to listen to the bat sounds with the support of ultrasound technology.

The goal of the public consulting meeting organized in July 2011 was to involve stakeholders in the Nature 2000 site Trascău SCI and SPA area in developing the Management Plan and to insert in it new ideas and conservation measures for bats populations.

During the period 30.08 – 02.09.2012 we organized a training for presenting the methods for identification and monitoring bats species. The meeting took place in Şuncuiuş – Pădurea Craiului Mountains.

They were representatives of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism Cluj Napoca, Romanian Association for Speleological Education, Romanian Bat Protection Association, Speleological Association Explorers, Transylvanian

Carpathian Society, Association for Bird and Nature Protection “Milvus Group”,
Bedeleu Adventure, Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Biology and Geology.



A book for children was published in Romanian and Hungarian languages about
bats species and their lives.



Barbastella barbastellus



Myotis myotis



Myotis oxygnathus



3. Capacity building

A training course regarding the methods for bats species monitoring was organized for 45 persons (rangers from the national and natural parks, speleologists, custodians of natural protected areas, volunteers from NGOs in Bihor county, within the project “Bat conservation in Craiului Forest, Bihor and Trascău Mountains” LIFE08 NAT/RO/000504.

Exchange of information between the other national and international institutions and organizations which are implementing LIFE+ projects.

4. International cooperation

The RBPA is involved in the EUROBATS activities which gives the possibility for expertise development by international consultation and change of experiences.

International cooperation between countries is necessary because the endangered migratory bats can be properly protected only if activities are carried out over the entire migratory range of the species

5. Protection of migratory species, conservation measures

RBPA organized actions at the local level solving particular problems concerning bats in that area.

Underground shelters (caves, mine galleries) have a special role in the life cycle of bats, some species using such shelters throughout the year and others only during hibernation. Because underground shelters are the most stable and

usually contain the most significant aggregations of hundreds or thousands of individuals, their protection must be top priority.

Speleological uncontrolled tourism, improperly closed caves can lead to loss of significant colonies and the decline of bat populations. Bats can tolerate low levels of disturbance caused by human activities in the shelters. But excessive disturbance (by often and uncontrolled access, vandalism, dumping of garbage, fire ignition, etc.), can lead to degradation of underground shelter, colony collapse, that the increased mortality and abandonment. Changing the use of the cave leads to excessive disturbance of bat population.

The main reasons of the decline are probably the disturbance of underground roosts due to uncontrolled speleological activities, tourism and modification of the habitat structure. The goal of bats protection is to contribute to the achievement of a favourable conservation status.

The data of the Sites of Community Interest about the bats species were updated.

During the period 23-27 May, in Bihor county, the "Program bat detector field Course - Oradea, 2011" was organized by the Natuurpunt (Belgia) and the Romanian Bat Protection Association.

The objectives of the training were the identification of the echolocation calls and monitoring of four Nature 2000 sites from Moldova with the aid of professional equipment. In the periods 9-16 April and 23-29.09.2011, in Letea, the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and to the Grigore Antipa" National Museum of Natural History the experts were involving in collecting external parasites from tree-dwelling bats" . Another aim was to identify the pattern of bats activity in Letea area, in spring and autumn seasons, to see if the area may serve as an important stopover habitat for bats during migration.

A guide for the management of bats habitats was elaborated. It is a guide for land

managers, land owners and their advisors.



6. Administrative, legislative, institutional measures

Government Emergency Ordinance No. 57/2007 regarding natural protection areas, conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora approved with amendments by Law No. 49/2011.

7. Activities planned for the next year

- ✓ Identify bats population trends;
- ✓ Developing information and increase the public awareness at all levels concerning the need to improve the actual status of bats' conservation and their habitats;
- ✓ Training and production of the information panels for local populations and tourists interest on bats conservation;
- ✓ Introduction of conservation measures to address those species which migrate across the Europe;

- ✓ Identify possible threats for bats species in their migratory routes;
- ✓ Development of collaboration and exchange of information between research institutions, regional and national agencies and all other sectors including the private sector, local communities, NGOs;
- ✓ Increase the interdisciplinarity research;
- ✓ Developing and enhancing institutional capacity and collaboration.