

37th Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee

Bonn, Germany, 23 – 24 November 2010

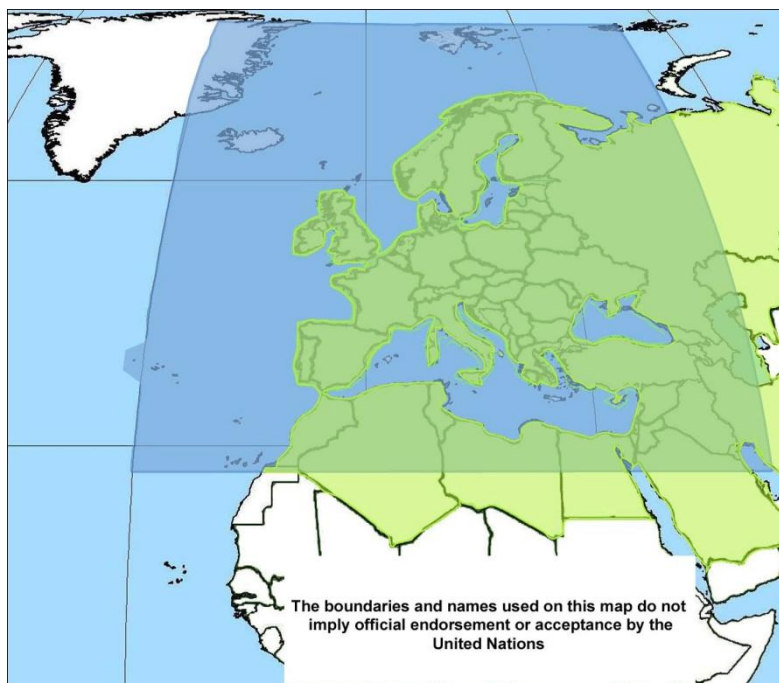
Report from the EUROBATS Secretariat



1. Outcomes of the 6th Session of the Meeting of Parties (Prague, Czech Republic, 20 – 22 September 2010)

The EUROBATS MoP6 was very successful and Parties adopted a new record number of 18 Resolutions covering the broad scope of the Agreement's activities (see www.eurobats.org/documents/meeting_reports/meeting_report_MoP6.html).

Strategically most important is Resolution 6.3, extending the geographical scope of the Agreement to the whole Western Palaearctic region including Northern Africa and the Middle East. The Agreement now covers 62 Range States (48 before). A number of the newly included countries were represented at MoP6 (Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria), strongly welcoming to be now covered by the Agreement and committed to participate in its work.



Throughout, the EUROBATS MoP6 was atmospherically marked by the unanimously strong and continuing commitment of the Parties and the wish to co-operate by additional eleven Non-Party-Range States present.

2. Year of the Bat

On the last day of the EUROBATS MoP6, the “Year of the Bat 2011 – 2012”, a joint CMS/EUROBATS awareness raising campaign was officially launched.

In the three months the campaign has been in operation, we have outlined a global campaign strategy, initiated strong working relationships with key partners, developed the Year of the Bat website, generated positive press coverage worldwide and created initial promotional material.

The campaign has also begun to attract new partners in important regions outside Europe, including the US, South America and Australia.

Key developments and successes of the Year of the Bat campaign to date include:

- **Media** – The campaign has so far issued 3 press releases on 1) the threat of forest fires in Russia to bats (Aug), 2) the Year of the Bat launch (Sept) and 3) European bats’ meeting UN biodiversity targets (Oct), all of which were picked up by Reuters and other news services. The press releases received wide media coverage. In particular, the Year of the Bat launch earned extensive global media coverage.

Additional media activities include interviews given to BBC and Deutsche Welle radio. After EUROBATS’ participation in the North American Society for Bat Research symposium (27-30 Oct), the Year of the Bat was covered online in Popular Science (*Bat Researchers: Please pay attention to us after Halloween*, 31/10/2010), a widely read US science magazine. The international initiative the Economics of Eco-Systems and Biodiversity (TEEB) has invited Year of the Bat to submit a column on bats and eco-system services, which will reach 30,000 monthly web visitors and generate new audiences for the campaign.

- **Website** – The website has been favourably received by the general public, important target audiences (e.g., high level government staff and academics) and UN colleagues. The website has already attracted almost 10,000 visitors with a steadily growing daily rate.

Over 200 persons and institutions from all over the world have sent messages to the campaign; information gathered shows that the site is appealing to all age groups, including children. Comments about the website are running along these lines:

- “That’s great to have Year of the Bat” (Agriculture, Forestry and Research Council, Japan)

- “Congrats for the beautiful project” (Mexico)
- “Very nice design, and good information. Makes bats cool!” (Sustainable Building and Climate Initiative, UNEP)
- “You have done a remarkable job with your information and this website.” (US Department of Agriculture Forest Service “)
- “I am working at Beijing Zoo, there are several brown fruit bat in our zoo, how can I arrange a successful education program with them as the program animal? Thank you.” (China)
- **Ambassadors** – The Year of the Bat now has three honorary ambassadors, who are well known by the general public and/or scientific community around the world. They have all received numerous awards for their scientific work on bat conservation, biology and ecology:
 - Dr. Merlin Tuttle (US)
 - Prof. Paul Racey (UK)
 - Prof. Rodrigo Medellín (Mexico)
- **Partnerships** – In addition to UNEP, CMS and EUROBATs, founding partners of the campaign include the IUCN Bat Specialist Group, Bat Conservation International (US), Bat Conservation Trust (UK), Lubee Bat Conservancy (US) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA).
 Important new partnerships with key organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, are being discussed, particularly in the US. National partners who have recently come on board include the Nature & Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), Germany, the North American Society for Bat Research (NASBR), US, the Australasian Bat Society and additional bat conservation groups in Europe, Latin America and Australia.

Next steps for the campaign include expanding the website with additional information, creating a Facebook page to reach a wider audience and generate global “bat community” interaction, producing regular e-bulletins (*Year of the Bat Chat*) and developing further promotional material (e.g., brochure, poster, postcard series). Other outreach activities are currently under discussion, such as a bat photo/drawing/poetry contest and the development of an educational programme.

3. Progress on bats in Africa

Since many years already, African countries have expressed strong interest to include bats in their conservation activities and unanimously demanded for capacity

building activities as a first step. The efforts of CMS and EUROBATS to make this happen are now bearing fruit, thanks to an excellent co-operation with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

FAO is organizing one week capacity building workshops on “Wildlife Health and the Human-Animal-Environmental Interface” in four different regions of Africa, aiming to cover the whole continent. One full day of these workshops will be fully dedicated to bats, their conservation needs as well as the vital ecosystem services provided by them.

Supported by CMS, the first of these workshops is taking place this week (22 – 26 November) nearby Johannesburg, South Africa, with the participation of 12 southern African countries.

Tuesday, 22 November, will be the day dedicated to bats and the EUROBATS Secretariat has been able to organise an excellent team of South African and European experts who will give lectures on all relevant topics. The day will culminate in an “African Bat Night” kindly organized by the local “Gauteng and Northern region Bat Interest Group (GNORBIG, www.batsgauteng.org.za) including exciting information about bats and life encounters with this fascinating species. The event will of course also be used to further promote “Year of the Bat” in Africa”.

As it has been the case for this first workshop, all CMS focal points in the regions concerned will be informed about the future workshops in early 2011 and be able to nominate participants.