

4th Session of the Meeting of Parties

Sofia, Bulgaria, 22 – 24 September 2003

Resolution No. 4.4

Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management



The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter "the Agreement"),

Noting the definition of forests adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (see <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/areas/forest/definitions.asp>);

Recalling the Resolution No. 4, Element 2: Bat Habitats, Forests, agreed at its Second Session (Bonn, July 1998);

Recognising the need to keep bats in a favourable conservation status in forest habitats within the frameworks of the Pan-European Biodiversity and Landscape Strategy and the European Habitats Directive;

Recognising that appropriate forest and land management can be in accordance with bat conservation if it follows basic principles of sustainability;

Noting the aims and activities of the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) as a Pan-European initiative for the promotion of sustainable forest management including the conservation of biodiversity in forests;

Recalling the 2002-2005 Joint Work Programme of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the actions to be taken for forest biodiversity (Section 3.1);

Noting the different sensitivities of species due to variation in ecological requirements and also different approaches needed for implementation of programmes at local, regional, national or international levels;

Recognising the ecological value of forests as bat roost and foraging sites or during bat migration, which is highest in unmanaged ancient forests but can also be moderate in managed forest types;

Recognising that there is a need to improve the conservation status of bats by modifying some management practices affecting their forest habitats;

1. *Decides* that the contracting Parties should identify key areas (for example wet forests and old forest stands) and key elements (for example open water, edge structures, ancient trees, roost trees, and other roost sites including man-made structures) for bats in forests. Where practicable, monitoring shall be undertaken as part of national bat monitoring programmes;
2. *Encourages* contracting Parties to protect, restore and enhance, where appropriate, such key elements and key areas with special emphasis to unfragmented forests, wet forests, undegraded ancient forests and undisturbed core areas;
3. *Further encourages* contracting Parties to combine forestry with bat conservation on the landscape level, taking into account transboundary aspects where appropriate. This includes legal and voluntary conservation of key areas and key elements, measures to enhance biodiversity in intensively managed forests, and connection of forest fragments with hedgerows and tree lines;
4. *Further encourages* contracting Parties to include bat conservation aspects into programmes and concepts of protected areas in forests at national and international level;
5. *Further encourages* contracting Parties to adopt measures, such as codes of best practice, to minimize damage to bats and their food from the use of pesticides and biocides especially in key areas;
6. *Further decides* that the contracting Parties should ensure that new and existing incentive schemes for forestry take bats into account where appropriate;
7. *Directs* the Secretariat to collate and offer existing information for forest managers and forest workers, advising on bat conservation in forests, for translation into other languages;
8. *Encourages* contracting Parties to promote training and awareness for forest managers and forest workers to improve bat conservation;
9. *Further encourages* contracting Parties to promote research on the relationship between bat communities and forest types and the impacts of forestry and land management practices on these communities;
10. *Further encourages* contracting Parties to recognise the value of Red Lists, which are in accordance with the IUCN categories, as an instrument to describe

the conservation status of bats and to evaluate the impact of forestry practices on bats in forests;

11. *Directs* the Advisory Committee to instigate the investigation and, if appropriate, the development of the use of bats as indicators for sustainable forestry and biodiversity in certain habitats in Europe;
12. *Further directs* the Advisory Committee to develop guidelines on bat-friendly forestry practices to fulfil Actions 3.1 and 9.3 of the CBD/CMS Joint Work Programme 2002-2005;
13. *Decides* that the contracting Parties should include the following in their National Reports to the Fifth Session of the Meeting of Parties:
 - Types of forestry and land management identified as causing problems for bats in forests;
 - Efforts to take bats into account when improving the sustainability of forestry practices;
 - The use of incentive schemes to provide resources for bat conservation measures in forests;
 - Measures to identify, manage and enhance key elements and key areas for bats in forests.