



MIGRATING BATS

Greater Noctules are threatened by wind turbines © Suren Gazaryan

Threats & Challenges for migratory bats

Wind turbines

Wind turbines often have deadly effects on migratory bats. Estimated numbers of bat deaths by wind turbines are as high as hundreds of thousands per year. Although it remains to be proven why bats are prone to be struck by wind turbines, a possible explanation is that bats migrating past turbines are attracted to them while searching for food or roosts, potentially mistaking wind turbines for trees.

Loss of habitat

Migrating bats depend on roosts and foraging habitats. In the night some species travel up to 200 kilometres to harvest their insect prey or fruits but during the day they will hide in roosts such as tree cavities, caves and abandoned mines. Relevant trees and entire forests are disappearing – for timber harvest or due to development projects. Disturbance in underground sites caused by tourism or mining activities may force bats to abandon these important roosts.

Intentional killing

Fears and superstitions about bats often lead to their intentional killing and eradication. People have been known to set fires in caves or fumigate large attics in order to get rid of bats. Fruit bats have often become a subjects of culling because farmers and local authorities perceive them as pests for commercial fruit crops.

BAT FACTS

- > Bats are mammals and give birth to one or two offspring per year.
- > They have been populating the Earth for the last 50 million years. There are more than 1200 bat species.
- > Depending on the species, bats are found in diverse climate zones and habitats such as forests, wetlands, in open countryside and human settlements.
- > Bats hibernate, migrate or do a combination of both to pass through the winter. Migratory species can cover distances up to hundreds of kilometres.

Threats to CMS-listed migratory bat species

The **Greater Noctule** (*Nyctalus lasiopterus*) is near-threatened and reports indicate a decreasing population trend. Wind farms constitute a threat to the Greater Noctule - some animals were found dead at Spanish wind turbines.

The **Straw-Coloured Fruit Bat** (*Eidolon helvum*) is near-threatened with a currently decreasing population trend. Severe deforestation, hunting for bush meat and predation are considered to be major threats for the species.

The **Mexican Free-Tailed Bat** (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) is classified as threatened in some parts of its range due to its dependence on a low number of roosts. The destruction of only one roost site could wipe out millions of free-tailed bats, making them particularly vulnerable to habitat loss.

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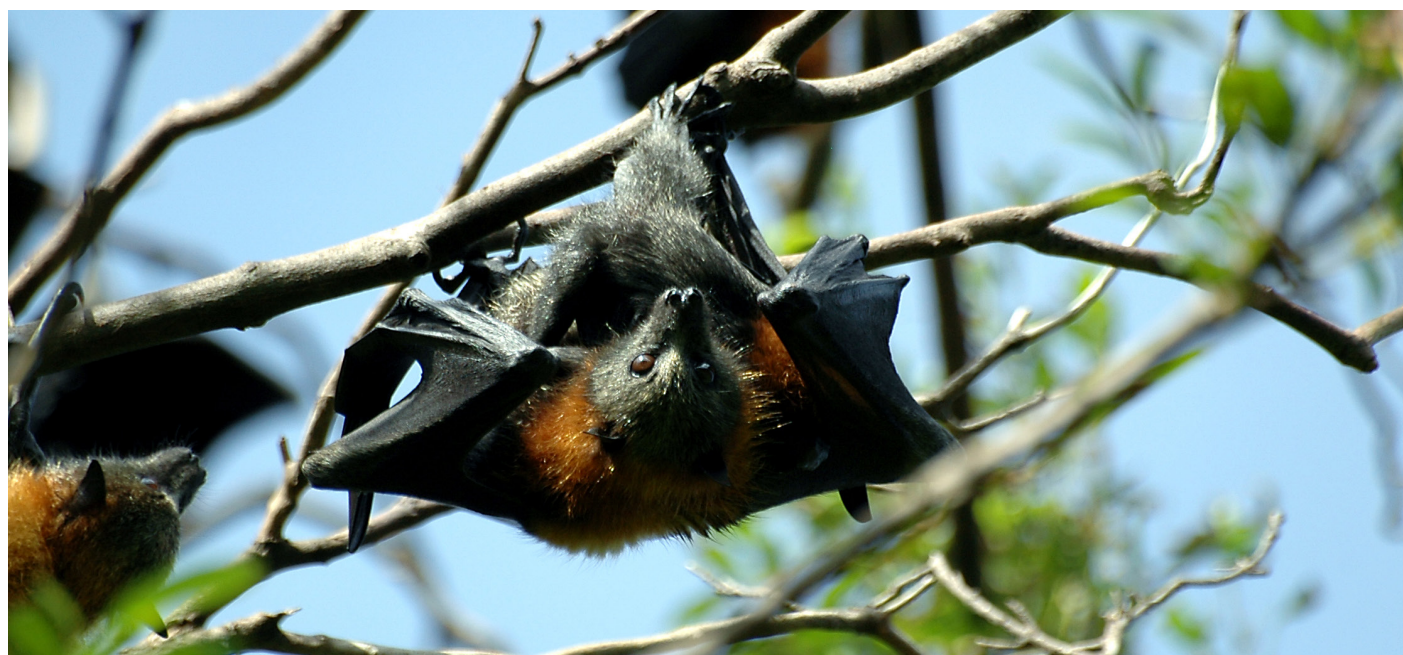
International Action for Bats

The Year of the Bat Campaign 2011-2012

The Year of the Bat was a global two-year awareness-raising campaign undertaken by CMS. Education regarding the importance of bats for intact ecosystems and human economies was the focus of the initiative. Bats are often misperceived as dangerous and exaggerated fears lead to attacks against them – education of the public is therefore crucial.

CMS Resolution

The issue of the threat posed by wind turbines to migratory bats is addressed by CMS through Resolution 11.27 on renewable energy and migratory species. Parties are urged to undertake careful physical planning with special attention to the mortality of bats resulting from collisions with wind turbines and consider means of reducing disturbance, including measures such as ‘shutdown on demand’ as appropriate.



Deforestation and hunting for bush meat are threatening fruit bats © Wouter van Doorn/ <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>

EUROBATS - THE BAT AGREEMENT

The Agreement on the Conservation of European Bats came into force in 1994. Until now 36 out of 63 range states have signed it. It aims to protect all 53 European bat species through legislation, education, conservation measures and international co-operation.

Objectives of the Agreement:

- > Prohibition of deliberate capture, keeping or killing of bats.
- > Implementation of appropriate measures to the protection and conservation of bats.
- > Identification, management and conservation of migratory routes.

About CMS

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), also known as the Bonn Convention, works for the conservation of a wide array of endangered migratory animals worldwide through negotiation and implementation of agreements and species action plans. It has over 120 Member States. CMS engages all relevant stakeholders in addressing wildlife crime in concert with all other aspects of wildlife conservation and management.

CMS Instruments

Animals receive protection under CMS through listing on its two Appendices, through global or regional agreements such as EUROBATS and through action plans.

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