



Issue 118

Spring 2019

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Bat News

National Bat Monitoring Programme

Citizen science at work

Wind farms and bats

Assessing and reducing the impact

Wildlife Assessment Check

Free online tool



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Bat Conservation Trust



What's your most cherished memory of bats?

Perhaps being thrilled by their aerial acrobatics, eavesdropping on their echolocation calls, or meeting a new species for the first time?

With your help we can ensure magical encounters with our unique bats are not just a fading memory but continue to be experienced by all generations.

If you would like to discuss leaving a gift in your will please contact Andreia Correia da Costa.



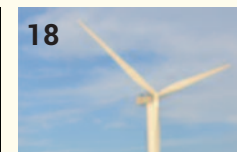
020 7820 7181
andriacdc@bats.org.uk
www.bats.org.uk/wills

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Cover – Wind turbines at dusk © Daniel Hargreaves

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Editorial committee: Joe Nunez-Mino, Andreia Correia da Costa, Shirley Thompson, Lisa Worledge and Colin Morris

Design: Matthew Ward

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Telephone **0345 1300 228**

Email enquiries@bats.org.uk www.bats.org.uk

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Bat Rescue Centre “from nowhere”

The team at the Bat Rehab Centre in Kharkiv (Ukraine) and **Oleksandra Kisel** tell us a fascinating story about how to change a huge Eastern European country to bat-friendly ways, how the everyday work in the biggest Bat Rehab Centre in Eastern Europe is going on, and what their achievements are.

Have you ever faced such challenges as 1000 noctules found hibernating on a single balcony, finding 100 bats a day throughout the week in one building, or keeping 85 kilos of mealworms bought for one winter as bat food? All of these are everyday scenarios for The Bat Rehabilitation Centre of Feldman Ecopark.



Bats hibernating in rescuer's balcony

Our Centre is the most significant and ongoing bat rescue, research and education project in Eastern Europe; it is located in Kharkiv, the second biggest city in Ukraine. The story of bat rehabilitation in Kharkiv began in 1999 when our current head Anton Vlaschenko started studying and rescuing local bats. There was an aim to help all the bats that occur in the city, and rehabilitate them. But it wasn't easy: mealworms (food for bats in winter time) are expensive and feeding tens or hundreds of bats is time consuming. There was just a possibility to water them and move them to a balcony for artificial hibernation.

On the other hand, we wanted to change public opinion about bats. Before 2007 the veterinary and sanitarian-epidemiology authorities included bats in the list of the most dangerous animals and publicised (through leaflets and TV interviews) the

danger from bats due to rabies. Our team started a bat-friendly information company, and together with sharing leaflets and posters we got more and more bats. We were looking for an umbrella organisation to start the bat rehabilitation work as a specialised project. In 2013 with the support of ICF “Alexander Feldman Foundation” on the base of Feldman Ecopark, we built up a Bat Rehabilitation Centre. Since 2012 more than 12,000 individuals (alive, injured and carcasses) of

nine bat species were rescued and received from 60 cities and villages of Ukraine. We mainly have these species: *Nyctalus noctula*, *Pipistrellus kuhlii*, *Eptesicus serotinus*, *Vespertilio murinus*, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and *Plecotus auritus* (in order from the most abundant to the rarest). From time to time we get big groups of bats (400-600 individuals) from other cities; more than half of the cases occur during winter. Now our centre has the only veterinarian in Ukraine who can treat bats with broken forearms and other injuries.

When processing a bat we identify species and sex, measure, weigh and ring it



© Oleksandra Kisel

Every-day feeding process

then record on a computer database. When it gets colder, we move bats to an artificial hibernaculum which is set at a cooler temperature. From once a week to once a month, we check the condition of the bats in hibernation. If their weight is lower than required, we start to feed and water them. Each year in March or April, we release up to 2000 bats in Feldman Ecopark, simultaneously conducting a presentation with eco-educational emphasis.



© Alona Prylutska

Bats hibernating in a fridge

Every year we received 1-16 baby bats (juvenile) found by people. Several female bats in captivity also give birth. In total 10 bats were successfully born, hand fed and released to the wild. In addition, in 2017 we had a case of noctule bats mating after two years in captivity, resulting in young being born successfully.



© Anton Vlaschenko

Bats found dead in the old window

Alongside rescuing bats in the city, we consult people about bats in other cities via the website of our Centre, by phone or by email. In these cases, we record the date and place of finding, number of individuals, precise description of bat appearance, photo or video materials of the rescued animals. On this link (<https://bit.ly/2Ms3CqH>) you can find a map with the distribution of reports for 2007-2018 (and other years). There is information about nine species of bats from 22 countries.

Finally, we change the attitudes of the majority of people. Hundreds of lectures and educational events have been held and hundreds of thousands of units of bat-educational materials printed and distributed. Every time big groups of bats (50-100 individuals) are discovered in houses, TV channels always ask us for a comment.

Our team of 12 highly motivated young people is pushing forward the project 365 days a year.

We are open for collaboration. Also, you are greatly invited to come to our Centre as a volunteer or researcher. This April we opened our Bat Collider – a special cage for bat study. So, come and see! Contact info - <http://www.bat-kharkov.in.ua/en> IG/FB - Kharkiv bat group