



Bats Romania - Conservation program for
Bat's Underground Habitats in SW Carpathians

LIFE00 NAT/RO/007187



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Project description:

Background

Romania is home to 28 of the 30+ species of bats native to Europe. Sixteen of these species can be found on the project sites (12 of which are listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive). These sites also contain a network of eight large protected limestone caves, where some of the most important bat colonies in the southwest Carpathians can be found. Some of these caves are among the biggest and most remarkable in Europe. They are also of great anthropological and paleontological importance, containing 15,000 year-old bear bones, 5,000 year-old Neolithic cemeteries and ritual sites, as well as a recently discovered quaternary carnivore bone deposit. Among the main threats for bats and their habitats in these sites are the lack of an effective conservation management, uncontrolled development of tourism of the caves, poor awareness of bats and their habitats, the lack of appreciation of the species by locals, improper habitat protection and lack of updated knowledge about populations and dynamics.

Objectives

The project aimed to introduce an effective conservation management in order to safeguard endangered bat species, conserve their underground habitats and incorporate biodiversity conservation as an integral part of sustainable development in the south-western Carpathian region. A range of measures was

planned, including preparatory research, the assessment of the bat population and habitat protection (for example, installation of gates and marking sites). Particular attention was given to public awareness initiatives and education activities, as well as to the involvement of local communities in the protection of the sites. The project also aimed to draw up a management plan and guidelines for setting up a protected area management authority.

Results

As a result of the project, gates, panels and trails have been installed at eight caves. Initial inventories of bat populations were also carried out and management plans were approved. These measures, amongst others, have contributed to an increase of the effectiveness of in-situ conservation of bats population. The project also equipped and refurbished two monitoring centres (in Topolnita and Closani), which can now be used for scientific purposes and as information points for awareness raising campaigns. The project established good cooperation with local authorities, communities and schools and improved the knowledge of the target species through the implementation of education campaigns. Initial results for the cave at Bistrica, for example, indicate that bats populations have increased due to the management actions carried out. The project has also been successful in bringing about a change of attitude in the local populations, especially amongst children. For example, locals living near the cave of Isverna have adopted a more a positive attitude towards bats.

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Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Species - Mammals

Habitats - Rocky and Caves

Keywords

management plan, monitoring, protected area, social participation

Target species

Barbastella barbastellus Miniopterus schreibersii Myotis bechsteinii Myotis blythii Myotis capaccinii Myotis dasycneme Myotis emarginatus Myotis myotis Rhinolophus blasii Rhinolophus euryale Rhinolophus ferrumequinum Rhinolophus hipposideros

Target Habitat types

- 8240 - Limestone pavements
- 8310 - Caves not open to the public

Natura 2000 sites

Not applicable

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	Green Cross Romania
Type of organisation	NGO-Foundation
Description	Green Cross Romania (GCR) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental environmental association, founded in 2000. GCR is a member of Green Cross International (GCI), an international environmental organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland founded in 1993 by Mikhail Gorbachev, former president of the Soviet Union. GCI has affiliates in 25 countries worldwide.
Partners	The Group of Underwater and Speleological Exploration (GESS), Romania The Romanian Academy-Speleological Institute (ISER) The National Museum of Natural History "Grigore Antipa" (MNINGA), Romania

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE00 NAT/RO/007187
Duration	01-AUG-2001 to 31-JAN -2005
Total budget	339,393.00 €
EU contribution	169,697.00 €
Project location	Associated Romania(Romania)

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