

## INDICATOR BATS: ESTABLISHING THE FIRST NATIONAL MONITORING PROGRAM FOR ROMANIA'S BATS

ABIGEL SZODORAY-PARADI<sup>1, 1a</sup>, FARKAS SZODORAY-PARADI<sup>1, 1b</sup>,  
COLIN CATTO<sup>2, 2a</sup>, JONATHAN A. RUSS<sup>2, 2b</sup>, and KATE E. JONES<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Romanian Bat Protection Association, 440014 str. I. Budai Deleanu nr.2, Satu Mare, Romania;

<sup>1a</sup>Email: abigel@xnet.ro; <sup>1b</sup>E-mail: farkas@xnet.ro

<sup>2</sup>The Bat Conservation Trust, 15 Cloisters Business Park, Battersea, London, United Kingdom;;

<sup>2a</sup>E-mail: colin1862@hotmail.com; <sup>2b</sup>E-mail: j.russ@abdn.ac.uk.

<sup>3</sup>The Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY, United Kingdom; E-mail: kate.jones@ioz.ac.uk

Bats show the potential to be useful biodiversity monitoring indicator species as they are distributed widely, use a wide range of landscapes and play an important role in ecosystem functioning (controlling insect populations, pollination and dispersing seeds) and their population declines reflect changes in climate, water quality and agricultural practices. However, attempts to establish bats as indicator species are hampered by the lack of basic information on how species abundances and distributions change in response to global change. Here we present the progress in establishing the first national bat monitoring program in Romania using a network of 77 volunteers to generate distributions and abundances of 14 species from over 1,600 acoustic records collected along road transects from 2006-2008. We discuss the results to date, compare relative species abundance rates with the UK and other neighbouring countries and the potential of the project to provide national biodiversity monitoring statistics to meet Romania's obligations to the Convention on Biological Diversity.