

## A Regional Action Plan for bat protection, Hauts-de-France (France)

Awareness raising and data collection actions for the improved protection and preservation of bats.

### EAFRD-funded projects

**Location:** Amiens, France

**Programming period:** 2014-2020

**Priority:** P4 – Ecosystems management

**Focus Area:** Biodiversity restoration, preservation & enhancement

**Measures:** M07 – Basic services & village renewal

<b>Funding:</b>	Total budget	419 678 (EUR)
	EAFRD	387 678 (EUR)
	National/regional	24 000 (EUR)
	Other funding sources	ERDF 8 000 (EUR)

**Timeframe:** 2020 to 2023

**Project promoter:** Picardie Nature Association

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### Project results

- Since 2020, several meetings and awareness-raising conferences on bat preservation were organised for elected representatives.
- In 2022, a study was conducted which helped to discover seven bat living sites in the local forests.
- One inventory of a hibernation site was made in the winter of 2022.
- One training session was organised with professionals from the building industry to help them consider bats better during their construction activities.
- The project created one full-time job.

### Key lessons and recommendations

- The awareness raising work takes a lot of time and information needs to be adapted for each target group. To achieve this, it is effective to utilise intermediaries, such as farmers, who know their built and natural environment well.
- It is effective to work in partnership with local public stakeholders who can help and facilitate the dissemination of information to a wider audience.

### Summary

Launched in 2019, the Regional Plan for Bat Protection in the Hauts-de-France Region aims to improve the knowledge and awareness of bats, and how their populations can be protected and preserved. The aim of this project was to mobilise a network of stakeholders, to collect data in the field and thereby to help improve the protection and preservation of bats.



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### Context

There are about 36 different bat species in France and, in the last ten years, almost one third of the population has disappeared. To protect and preserve the species, France has implemented a National Plan from 2016 to 2025, which has led to the elaboration of a regional plan adapted to local specificities. The Regional Plan for Hauts-de-France was developed with the support of EAFRD for the period 2019 to 2025. It focuses on bat species included in the national plan and on those species that are specific to the local areas of Hauts-de-France.

The Regional Plan incorporates 12 main actions with 41 sub-actions relating to coordination and information actions of local stakeholders, research / studies and on bat protection actions. It focuses on several themes such as habitat preservation, agriculture and urban planning. The objective is to work on all aspects that have an impact on the life cycle of bats. EAFRD support was required for eight of the 12 main action areas, including research / studies, awareness-raising activities across and to fund a full-time job dedicated to the management of the plan. This project was led in partnership with the Hauts-de-France Region and the Picardie Nature association.

## Objectives

The overall objective of the project was to help preserve bats by improving knowledge of the species (living environments, regional territory covered by the population etc.). There were several sub-objectives as follows:

- To measure the development of bat populations.
- To make an inventory of the existing species and identify the sites frequented by them.
- To monitor the hibernation and maternity sites of bats in the region.
- To protect the identified hibernation and maternity sites as high-priority locations for the species.
- To raise awareness and train professionals and public stakeholders in becoming more attentive to the presence of bats and knowledgeable as to how to protect them as part of their work.

## Activities

The project was implemented in partnership with the Hauts-de-France Region and the Picardie Nature association. EAFRD funding contributed to several activities:

### Plan coordination:

- Updating of key data (such as number of sites hosting species, number of hibernating and maternity species etc.).
- Publishing a newsletter, twice a year, to inform public stakeholders about the actions carried out under the plan in Hauts-de-France.
- Organising conferences for public stakeholders to raise awareness of bat-related issues.
- Supporting stakeholders in disseminating information on this topic.

### Studies (and equipment to undertake the studies where required):

- Commissioning of several studies and inventories to improve knowledge and insight, such as:
  - Study of underground bat hibernation sites (inventory, list of sites)
  - Study of maternity sites (inventory, identification of sites)
  - Identification of new maternity sites to be protected in the region
  - Literature review of studies and actions undertaken to preserve ecological corridors beneficial to bats
  - Study on the regional territory, including a survey with farmers to capture information on the presence of bats on agricultural sites

### Preservation activities:

- Prioritising of maternity sites to protect the bat populations and adapt these sites to maintain the presence of bats there (including protection of sites).
- Preserving of ecological corridors that are beneficial to bats.

### Awareness raising:

- Facilitating exchanges with forestry stakeholders to improve the protection of bats in forest management and to develop coordinated actions for their preservation.
- Conducting awareness-raising events for professionals and public stakeholders.



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## Main results

The implementation of the Regional Plan and the EAFRD project started in 2019. To this date, several results have been achieved:

### Plan coordination

- Publication of the newsletter (two newsletters per year).
- Since 2020, several meetings and awareness-raising conferences on bat preservation were organised for elected representatives.

### Studies

- In 2021, two maternity sites were identified.
- In 2022, a study was conducted which helped to discover 7 bat living sites in the local forests.
- One inventory of a hibernation site was made in the winter of 2022.

### Awareness raising

- One guide to raise awareness among elected representatives and public stakeholders was created. It aimed to inform on national legislation regarding bats and offers solutions to protect bats in local policies / actions. The guide also provided access to resources on bats. The guide was disseminated to all local authorities in Picardie.
- One training session was organised with professionals from the building industry to help them consider bats during their work activities.

### Job creation

- The project supported the creation of a full-time job dedicated to the implementation of the Regional Plan.

## Key lessons and recommendations

- The awareness raising work is time-consuming and information needs to be adapted for each target group. To achieve this, it is effective to utilise intermediaries, such as farmers, who know their built and natural environment well and can provide useful information.
- It is effective to work in partnership with local public stakeholders who can help and facilitate the dissemination of information to a wider audience.
- The research showed that there is still a substantial amount of work to be done and many actions and subjects to be dealt with.
- The Regional Plan allows engagement with people who are interested in knowing more about the subject. At the same time, one realises that many stakeholders, including professionals, are not well informed about the topic.

### Additional information:

[www.picardie-nature.org/protection-de-la-faune-sauvage/protection-et-cohabitation-avec/le-plan-regional-d-actions-en/](http://www.picardie-nature.org/protection-de-la-faune-sauvage/protection-et-cohabitation-avec/le-plan-regional-d-actions-en/)

