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Bat Species of the Year 2015

Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*)



Bat Species of the Year 2015: Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*). © Wolfgang Forstmeier

Nathusius' pipistrelle bat is selected as the first ever 'Bat Species of the Year' by Batlife Europe. Over 30 countries in Europe will focus on promoting conservation issues and raising public awareness about this remarkable bat species in 2015.

The distribution of Nathusius' pipistrelle covers vast parts of Europe. While the breeding areas of this species are located mainly in the north-eastern parts, it hibernates mainly in south-western or southern parts of Europe. In Romania Nathusius' pipistrelle can be found in every region.

Nathusius' pipistrelles have adapted to seasonal climatic changes, performing large-scale movements to escape harsh environmental conditions and low levels of food resources. Recovery



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data of banded bats highlight travel distances of up to 2,000 km. They show that populations from Central Europe, north Scandinavia, the Baltics and Russia leave breeding grounds and move northeast to west/southwest for their winter roosts in the Netherlands, in France, Switzerland and Italy.

The minimum migratory speed has been estimated at approximately 50-60 km/day and energetic demands of continuous flights are fulfilled using a 'mixed-fuel strategy'. This is based on a combination of directly metabolised dietary proteins from insects preyed upon whilst flying and fatty acids from body reserves. Acoustic surveys of ultrasound calls indicate that *Nathusius'* pipistrelles are crossing even the highest altitudes in the Alps, up to 3100 m above sea level.

Dr Jasja Dekker, Chair of Batlife Europe: "Batlife Europe has chosen *Nathusius'* pipistrelle as 'Bat Species of the Year 2015' because this fascinating species is not only a long distance migrant, but is threatened by the fast growing number of wind turbines on its migration flights. This species is especially vulnerable to increased mortality at on and off shore wind turbines. *Nathusius'* pipistrelles are even on top of the wind farm casualties' statistics. Due to a lack of experience younger individuals are particularly at risk."

"As a consequence of the migratory behaviour, usual conservation management measures based on defined subpopulations are hard to establish," Szodoray-Paradi Farkas from The Romanian Bat Protection Association said. "The migratory nature of the species therefore requires careful monitoring throughout the species' range and a transboundary approach in conservation. Batlife Europe facilitates international communication and knowledge sharing."

- **Batlife Europe** is an international NGO built from a partnership of national bat conservation organisations committed to promoting the conservation of all bat species and their habitats throughout Europe. <http://www.batlife-europe.info>
- **The Romanian Bat Protection Association - R.B.P.A.** - is an romanian NGO with over 15 years experience, that unifies those people from Romania who are interesting in bat research and bat protection. The mission is to promote activities in the field of bat protection and research focusing on general environmental protection as well. <http://www.aplr.ro>

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