

DUTCH VISIT TO EASTERN RHODOPES

July 2002 the Field Working Group (FWG) of the Dutch Society for the Study and Conservation of Mammals (VZZ) paid a visit to the Eastern Rhodopes, concentrating on the Madjarovo area. The VZZ and its FWG are volunteer organisations, in which both professional and amateur mammal experts co-operate. The aim of the FWG is to encourage and develop field studies on mammals. Part of its yearly program is a field workshop abroad. These workshops aim 1) to survey species which are rare in the Netherlands or do not occur there and 2) to extend and exchange the knowledge of survey methods. The foreign workshops always take place in co-operation with a local organisation, in order to ensure that the results of the workshop will be known in the country visited. Moreover, in this way the FWG tries to facilitate the use of its results in the protection of mammals and their habitat. If possible, the FWG tries to fill up gaps, indicated by the local organisation, in the local knowledge of mammals.



The 2002 workshop was organised in co-operation with the people of Nature Information and Conservation Centre Eastern Rhodopes (NICCER) of Madjarovo, Teodorova Ivanova of the Sofia University and Stoycho Stoychev from the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds / BirdLife Bulgaria. This paper focuses on the highlights, as far as mammals are concerned, of the workshop. An extensive report will be available later on. A full list of the mammal species observed is presented in table I.



During the workshop small mammals were surveyed by setting out lines of live traps at six different locations. The traps placed in dry areas (dominating in the area) produced hardly any catches, a familiar phenomenon. Traps put in the vicinity of a pool and along streams captured *Microtus guentheri*, *Mus macedonicus*, *Nemoys anomalus* and *Apodemus flavicollis*. Checking bat boxes in the forest around Madjarovo produced sightings of *Glis glis* and *Dryomys nitidula*, the latter being the first observation of this species in FWG history. *Glis glis* proved to be quite abundant all around, amongst others roosting in the NICCER building.



Surveys with bat detectors focussed on finding roosts of bats in villages. The FWG found several roosts, mainly of *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Roosts of *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, *R. ferrum equinum* and *Plecotus austriacus* were found too. One roost in a house almost certainly housed both *Pipistrellus pygmeus* and *P. pipistrellus*. Specimens of the first species were observed with the bat detector. However, two specimens caught, when emerging from the roost, proved to be *P. pipistrellus*. One roost of *P. pipistrellus* was found in a hollow concrete electricity pole. Rather spectacular was the finding of a roost of *Tadarida teniotis* in the cliffy slopes just north of Madjarovo. A colony of several hundreds of *Myotis mystacinus* was found in a former hospital. Possibly, it is *M. aurescens*¹. However, this has to be confirmed through DNA-analysis. Mist netting produced observations of several species known to the area. The highlight, however, was the catching of a male *Nyctalus lasiopterus*.

Checking buildings, bridges, etcetera produced several roosts of mainly *Rhinolophus hipposideros* and *Myotis myotis*. *M. nattereri*, *M. myotis* and *Pipistrellus savii* were found in crevices in bridges. Checking buildings also produced owl pellets, which have not been analysed completely yet. A

¹ Recently separated from *M. mystacinus*; the taxon has to be recognized yet.

quick scan revealed the presence of skulls of several species, of which *Suncus etruscus* is the most remarkable.

Some FWG-members heard *Canis aureus* howling. A flash encounter with a carnivore is quite likely with a specimen of *C. lupus*. Footprints, which are quite likely those of *C. lupus*, were found along the Arda river near Madjarovo. There and on other locations *Lutra lutra*'s footprints and spraints were found abundantly.

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Table 1
Mammal species observed

Scientific name	English name
<i>Apodemus flavicollis</i>	Yellow necked mouse
<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>	Wood mouse
<i>Canis aureus</i>	Jackal
<i>Canis lupus</i>	Wolf
<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	Roe deer
<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	Red deer
<i>Citellus citellus</i>	European souslik
<i>Dryomys nitedula</i>	Forest dormouse
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	Serotine
<i>Erinaceus concolor</i>	Eastern hedgehog
<i>Felis silvestris</i>	Wildcat
<i>Glis glis</i>	Fat dormouse
<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Brown hare
<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Otter
<i>Martes foina</i>	Stone marten
<i>Meles meles</i>	Badger
<i>Microtus guentheri</i>	Mediterranean vole
<i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i>	Schreiber's bat
<i>Mus macedonicus</i>	-
<i>Mustela erminea</i>	Stoat
<i>Mustela putorius</i>	Western polecat
<i>Myotis aurescens</i>	-
<i>Myotis capaccinii</i>	Long-fingered bat
<i>Myotis daubentonii / capaccinii</i>	-
<i>Myotis emarginatus</i>	Geoffroy's bat
<i>Myotis myotis</i>	Greater mouse-eared bat
<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	Natterer's bat
<i>Neomys anomalus</i>	Miller's water shrew
<i>Nyctalus lasiopterus</i>	Greater noctule
<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Leisler's bat
<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	(common) Noctule
<i>Oryctogalus cuniculus</i>	Rabbit
<i>Pipistellus kuhli</i>	Kuhl's pipistrelle
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Pipistrelle
<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Soprano pipistrelle
<i>Pipistrellus savii</i>	Savi's pipistrelle
<i>Plecotus auritus / austriacus</i>	-
<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>	Grey long-eared bat
<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	Brown rat
<i>Rattus rattus</i>	Black rat
<i>Rhinolophus blasii</i>	Blasius' horseshoe bat
<i>Rhinolophus euryale</i>	Mediterranean horseshoe bat
<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	Greater horseshoe bat
<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Lesser horseshoe bat
<i>Rhinolophus mehelyi</i>	Mehely's horseshoe bat
<i>Rhinolophus mehelyi / hipposideros</i>	-
<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Wild boar
<i>Tadarida teniotis</i>	European free-tailed bat
<i>Talpa europaea</i>	Mole
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Red fox