

Participant Information: Research Priorities for UK Bat Conservation

Thank you for your interest in this survey. Before you decide to take part in this study, please make sure to read through this accompanying information carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish, so you understand the reason for this research and the questions you will be asked if you choose to participate. It is important that you understand the purpose of this research and your role if you are to take part. If something is unclear or you wish to know more, please contact Conor Cooper at cc964@cam.ac.uk. After reading this information, take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part in this study.

Purpose of the study

Aims

1. To determine the relative importance of the various threats to bats to UK bat conservation stakeholders
2. To determine whether stakeholders feel these threats are adequately addressed by current conservation actions
3. To determine whether stakeholders would prefer to address shortfalls in current conservation actions through research into whether existing solutions work, improving existing solutions or the creation of new solutions

Background

Conservation research priorities do not always align with the needs of stakeholders on the ground, leading to wasted effort on the part of researchers, who conduct research that does not aid or inform solutions to conservation problems, and on the part of stakeholders, who make use of untested and potentially unreliable or ineffective solutions. Such wasted effort to our mutual goals is particularly damaging at a time of worsening climate and biodiversity crisis. As such, the aim of this study is to bring these aspects of the conservation sector, research and practice, into alignment by identifying the issues of highest priority to stakeholders, the solutions that are least effective, and the ways research can most effectively address these issues.

This survey will be open from 06/01/2020 and run for six weeks, closing on 16/02/2020.

Participation

Why have I been chosen?

Participants were chosen on the basis that they are stakeholders in bat conservation in the UK who are involved in bat conservation and management. The form this stakeholder role takes may be as a researcher, field ecologist or other bat conservation and management practitioner role such as a member of a charity (NGO) or statutory organisation, or as an individual or member of an organisation whose primary role is not the conservation and management of bats but is involved nonetheless as a result of their operations, e.g. developers working on a building where bats are roosting, a farmer seeking to manage their farm to promote bat presence, cave managers running tours of caves occupied by bats or foresters logging in bat habitat, and is involved in these organisations' bat conservation and management efforts. Participants must be 18 or over. In most cases participants will be self-selected in response to advertising made available through email circulars, forums and bulletins where stakeholders are likely to see them, but in some cases we may have contacted you directly where such channels were not available, based on these criteria.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part is entirely voluntary, and refusal or withdrawal will involve no penalty or loss, now or in the future. Participants who have enrolled in the study may freely withdraw and request to have their data removed from the study at any time up until publication of the results.

What do I have to do?

Participants will be asked to fill out a survey, wherein they will be asked to:

1. State how they are involved in bat conservation and management by providing their organisational affiliation and role title (if applicable)
2. Score the level of relative importance of 40 issues in bat conservation in their work
3. Rate their satisfaction with the actions available to address *up to* 40 of the previously listed issues, and
4. score the level of relative importance of three different types of research to increasing their satisfaction:
 - Improving certainty in how well existing actions work to address the issue
 - Improving the effectiveness of existing actions
 - Inventing new actions to address the issue

For the third activity, participants do not need to provide assessments of the actions for all 40 issues. Instead, participants should only provide ratings for issues they feel sufficiently able to comment on. Participants are *not* expected to comment on the actions all or even a majority of the issues, but are free to do so if they feel able to.

Participants may exit the questionnaire and resume it at a later time before questionnaire closure. Questionnaire completion time will vary with how many topics participants choose to comment on, but for most participants should not take more than an hour of their time.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Personal, identifying information (names & email addresses) linked to the data will be securely retained for 12 months after survey closure, after which it will be deleted and the data anonymised. If participants consent to being contacted in future for further research their personally identifying information will be retained for 24 months after survey completion and they may be contacted to request a follow-up interview. Participants will retain the right to decline or withdraw from being contacted or interviewed at any time with no consequences, and may withdraw from being contacted or interviewed in future without being withdrawn from this survey if they so wish. Individuals who agreed to be contacted for follow-ups who choose to withdraw from the survey will be automatically withdrawn from follow-up contact and their personally identifying information deleted in line with this. If participants wish to be contacted to be notified of the study's publication, their personally identifying data will be held until publication. Participants on the notification contact list but not on the further research contact list will not be contacted except to notify them of the study publication. Individuals who consented to be contacted for further research and to being notified when the study is published will be contactable for 24 months after the closure of the survey for follow-up research but will not be contacted for follow-up research after this time. Participants may withdraw from being notified of the publication of the study at any time with no consequences and will not be withdrawn from any other aspect of the study they have consented to, unless they specifically also request to be removed from them.

General information about how the University uses personal data can be found at <https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/research-participant-data>.

Risks and benefits of taking part

There should be no risks associated with participation in this survey, as it does not require disclosure of sensitive data.

There are no particular benefits to the individual from participating in this survey, although in the long run the use of this research to inform future research policy may result in research developments that aid them in their work. This benefit is likely to be marginal at best on an individual level however.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of this research will be written up in journals as open-access research papers, freely available to the public. A preprint of the research may also be obtained by contacting the study authors upon publication. Published results will be anonymised. Data will normally be presented in terms of groups and overall metrics, rather than individual's responses, but any individual results presented will be totally anonymous, without means of identifying the individual from the data.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is funded by the University of Cambridge with a Natural Environment Research Council Doctoral Training Studentship grant.

Ethical review of the study

The project has been reviewed by the University of Cambridge Psychology Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for further information and next steps

If you are unsure about any of the details or have any further queries, please contact Conor Cooper (David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, UK, tel: +44(0)7706153664, email: cc964@cam.ac.uk), who will be happy to answer any questions.

If you have read and understood this participant information and wish to take part, you may now click the link to the online survey ([survey address]). You will be directed to fill out a contact and consent form, which you must complete before gaining access to the survey itself.