

> Red List Chiroptera (bats)

Threatened Species in Switzerland, Status 2011

Summary of the publication «Liste rouge Chauves-souris»
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> Summary

The Red List of Swiss bats (2014) was established in accordance with the criteria and categories proposed by the IUCN (SPSC 2010), including the criteria of evaluation at both regional and national levels (IUCN 2003).

A total of 26 of the thirty Swiss species were evaluated. Among those species evaluated, no species are classified as extinct in Switzerland (RE). 15 (58 %) are red-listed species: 3 (12 %) are critically endangered (CR), 5 (19 %) are endangered (EN), and 7 (27 %) are vulnerable (VU). A further 7 species (27 %) are near threatened (NT). The majority of species live and bear young in buildings, particularly in rural regions. The renovation and reassignment of historic buildings pose a threat to the long term conservation of these species. Moreover, such species hunt mostly in strongly structured landscapes, including farmland, forests, and the banks of watercourses and lakes. Intensifying agricultural and forestry practices, land use changes, and the use of pesticides remain a significant threat. Habitat fragmentation due to the presence of infrastructure (e. g. communication routes, lights) has become more severe. The conservation of underground habitats is also an important issue. The majority of species hibernate in such habitats, whether natural (including caves and sinkholes) or artificial (basements, mines, tunnels, forts).

This new version of the Red List replaces that of the Swiss Bat Centers East and West (1994), which was established on the basis of different criteria. Declines in the number of threatened species (RE, CR, EN, VU) are largely due to the use of new evaluation criteria (IUCN 2003) and improved understanding of species distributions and is not necessarily the result of any improvement to the conditions that these species currently face, except for two species. In fact, the sharp declines seen in certain particularly threatened species, as well as in other fairly common species, suggest the contrary: a worsening of the situation facing a significant fraction of bats in Switzerland. The dedicated network of those volunteering with the Swiss Bat Centers East and West is the central factor that has helped to protect and improve conditions of those species roosting in buildings. However, long-term conservation of these colonies is dependent upon the will of property owners. New threats like wind farms may seriously affect the future of species that are now common.