



The idea of protecting bats is almost unknown in Jordan. No law or program specifically cites bats and conservation resources are scarce. At least 24 bat species have been reported in the nation – 31 percent of all of Jordan's mammals. Little is known of their status, although some reports suggest alarming declines as habitats disappear due to urbanization and expanding agriculture, growing pesticide use and other threats.

As in many other countries, much of the problem stems from a lack of understanding the values of bats and a history of harmful misinformation.

The Royal Society for Conservation of Nature, a nongovernment organization charged with conserving wildlife and managing nature reserves, is working to add bats to Jordan's young conservation movement. With a BCI Global Grassroots Conservation Fund grant, the group developed materials and conducted a bat-conservation workshop for park rangers, field workers and researchers.

The workshop was organized by the Royal Society's Zuhair S. Amr, a Biology Professor at Jordan University of Science and Technology. It was designed to introduce these key personnel to the nation's bat diversity, the benefits and conservation needs of bats and the information on identification and behavior that will help them monitor bat populations and identify key roosting sites.

The Royal Society hopes to continue its efforts with a bat-education campaign aimed at public schools, a bat-conservation task force of biologists, conservationists and nature enthusiasts and efforts to expand the legal framework to specifically include bats.

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