

Project Update: January 2026

The team continued to monitor known bat roost sites while conducting additional searches to document new roost locations before bat mist-net capture surveys. We uncovered that some tree roosts had been recently abandoned in the dry season, with bats relocating to unknown locations. Our preliminary hypothesis is that bats abandoned tree roosts with defoliated leaves to reduce exposure to predators and other unfavourable elements. This could also be seasonally linked to food availability during the dry season, which is characteristic of the study area's savanna system. However, we expect that bats will return during the rainy season, given their fidelity to favoured roosts, as is usually the case, unless disturbed by anthropogenic factors. We will revisit these sites during the rainy season to confirm this preliminary hypothesis before developing and finalising the urban bat location map.

Due to this unexpected challenge, we conducted other related research objectives while planning a more appropriate field sampling protocol to capture and identify bats. Thus, during this phase of the project, we organised a bat training workshop for university students and volunteers to learn about the importance of bats, bat monitoring techniques, and how individuals can help to protect bats in their communities. At the end of the workshop, participants expressed interest in participating in bat mist-net capture surveys and in school education campaigns, both scheduled for the remaining phases of the project. We will engage them accordingly in the next phase.

In addition, a bat questionnaire to solicit residents' knowledge and perceptions of bats, among other research themes, was designed and finalised. After pretesting, the questionnaire was administered to residents in the study area by the research team. So far, we have administered the questionnaire to about 250 respondents living in the Tamale Metropolitan and Sagnarigu Municipal Assemblies. We will commence data entry soon to enable thematic and other relevant statistical analyses to draw insights from the data.

The team will conduct an intensive bat survey at unabandoned roost locations in January/February prior to the onset of the rainy season. Annual roost locations (i.e., abandoned in dry but returned to in the rainy seasons) will then be mist-netted in the rainy season. A progress report on these and other remaining research activities will be provided at subsequent reporting rounds after the activities are completed. Thank you for the opportunity to conduct this study on urban bats, which will inform management planning, as they are threatened by various anthropogenic activities in the study area.



Making a presentation at the bat training workshop. © Esther L. Darkoh



Demonstrating acoustic monitoring devices to workshop participants. © Esther L. Darkoh



Field demonstration of mist netting. © Esther L. Darkoh



Field demonstration of mist netting. © Esther L. Darkoh



Field demonstration of mist netting. © Esther L. Darkoh.



Conducting interviews about bats. © Esther L. Darkoh



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