Project Update: March 2026

To increase the robustness of our questionnaire findings, the team actively expanded the survey to reach an additional 450 respondents, bringing the total to about 700 respondents in the study area. We documented new roost locations through this expanded survey effort, including sacred groves that housed important bat populations within the study area.

Educational talks were held at four government schools to celebrate World Wildlife Day (March 3, 2026), with a focus on Basic 5 and 6 students. Pre-evaluation forms with basic questions about bats were distributed for students to complete before we proceeded with the educational talks. The talk covered general information about bats, conservation, threats, and ways to protect them. During the Q&As, a student who answered correctly received a Rufford T-shirt, which motivated others to pay more attention. During our visit to one of the schools, Adubliyilli Primary, we met the assemblyman and officers from the Ghana Education Service who joined the presentation. The community's assemblyman also greeted us after the talk and expressed his satisfaction with our visit. The officers from the Ghana Education Office later commended us on our bat education program and recommended that we conduct more of such sessions in almost all the schools in the GTA. Also, headteachers and teachers in the selected schools advised us to visit regularly for such education and assured us that their doors will always be open to us. Moreover, the officers from the Ghana Education Office also commended the education and recommended that we conduct such sessions in almost all the schools in the GTA.

We began the bat-trapping exercise during this phase of the project. So far, we have caught and identified 3 bat species using mist nets. We have observed, through acoustic monitoring of the investigated sites, that several species inhabit these areas and that most are high-flying (e.g., vespertilionids, molossids) and evade our ground mist nets. We are, however, moving mist nets within trap sites to minimise trap avoidance, as observed during bat-trapping exercises. Our recent interactions with property owners with bat roosts on their properties revealed that some active persecution of bats is still ongoing (e.g., see the picture of the felled roost tree below).

As we transition into the rainy season, the team will conduct further intensive bat surveys at other locations, including annual roosts in April, to document additional bat species. A final report on all activities conducted will be submitted at the end of the project in June. We are grateful for the opportunity provided to conduct this study on urban bats, which will inform management planning and conservation interventions in urban areas.

A bat (*Epomops buettikoferi*) is about to be released by a team member after measurement. © Esther L. Darkoh.

A bat (*Taphozous mauritianus*) caught in a mist net at the study location. © Esther L. Darkoh.

Preparing to set up a station for sample collection and measurement of bats. © Esther L. Darkoh

Demonstrating how to remove a trapped bat from the mist net. © Esther L. Darkoh

Bats caught in the mist nets at a degrading roost site. © Esther L. Darkoh

Bat (*Epomophorus gambianus*) captured during survey. © Esther L. Darkoh.

Bat sample collection and measurement recording by the team. © Esther L. Darkoh