

## **Project Update: October 2025**

I visited key stakeholders in the Greater Tamale Area to inform them about my urban bat survey project. The visited stakeholders included the Regional and District Forest Services Division, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Sagnarigu Municipal Assembly, and the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly. The staff and heads of these institutions were excited about my project and pledged their support should I require assistance from them.

During my brief interactions with these key stakeholders, we exchanged ideas about the relevance of bats, including where and what they feed on, and roost locations, whether within their office space or elsewhere in the study area. The Assemblies provided me with the list and contact details of Assembly members in their respective electoral areas, and we reached out to obtain information about the presence or absence of bats in their localities. I also made a radio announcement for individuals to reach me on a designated phone number should they have information about bats. Together with my team, I continue to visit communities or sites to verify the presence of bats, based on phone calls, text messages, and other information.

However, a worrying trend appears to unfold as I search for and visit sites to document the presence of bats. About a quarter of the sites visited so far revealed that the bats had abandoned their roosts. When I quizzed a few people in some of these sites, I was informed that the roost trees were either destroyed or people were paid to continuously use guns to create noise to scare them away, which is suggestive of persecution. Nonetheless, we have also uncovered some roost sites in residential areas, sacred groves, and urban protected forests. However, my preliminary inquiry indicates bats in the latter are often hunted due to poor enforcement of forest regulations. For example, I was recently informed that some bats, which previously roosted on trees at the back of a public office building in an urban forest, relocated to trees in the front within a fenced area of the forest to avoid being hunted and disturbed by gun noise.

I am still travelling within the study area to document the locations of bat roosts, following which several sites and habitat types will be selected for intensive bat surveys starting in October. A progress report on the mapped locations of bat roosts, a training workshop, identified species, and other research activities will be given at subsequent reporting rounds after the activity is performed. Thank you for the opportunity to conduct this study on urban bats, which will inform management planning, given that they are threatened by various anthropogenic activities in this rapidly urbanising city of northern Ghana.



My visit to the Environmental Protection Agency. © Esther L. Darkoh



My visit to the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly. © Esther L. Darkoh





A team member recording the geographical coordinates of a bat tree roost. © Esther L. Darkoh



Bats roosting in trees in a human settlement. © Esther L. Darkoh



An abandoned building used as a roost by bats. © Esther L. Darkoh