



# The importance of volunteers in bat conservation – example of activities related to problem of light pollution

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Involving volunteers in bat research work has been of great importance in different bat monitoring activities and in many public awareness activities. In Slovenia, a strong kick off for the volunteers involvement in bat field work was a start of the Life+ project Life at Night.



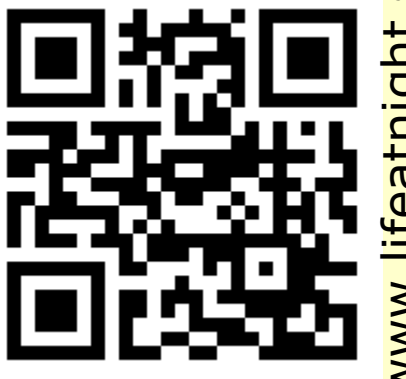
Photo: Simon Zidar

Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) is a focus species of the project, where we study the effects of original and changed illumination of the roosts on bat emergence time and behavior. Daily counts at the roosts, as well as evening observations of emergence are being monitored ten times each summer on 9 selected churches. Numerous volunteers participated in the field work and also public awareness activities.



**Project Life at Night - Improving the conservation status of nocturnal animals (moths and bats) by reducing the effect of artificial lighting at cultural heritage sites (2010 - 2014).**  
[www.lifeatnight.si](http://www.lifeatnight.si)

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www.lifeatnight.si

Besides research team, around 50 volunteers per year have been actively involved in performing various field monitoring activities, mainly in observations of bat emergence behavior in two field seasons of the project (summer 2011, 2012)! There were a lot of students and pupils involved.



Photo: Simon Zidar



Photo: Simon Zidar



Photo: Lea Likozar



Photo: Simon Zidar

Many lectures and workshops for schools and general public are being conducted. Some pupils actively participated in the evening field work or did their own school projects on the theme of bats and light pollution.

Many of biology students that participated in the bat field work conducted their own individual research studies on bats and light pollution and are still actively performing their own bat research projects.

Many volunteers got involved in various public awareness activities to inform and educate the general public about the biology of bats, main threats to bats and ways of bat conservation.



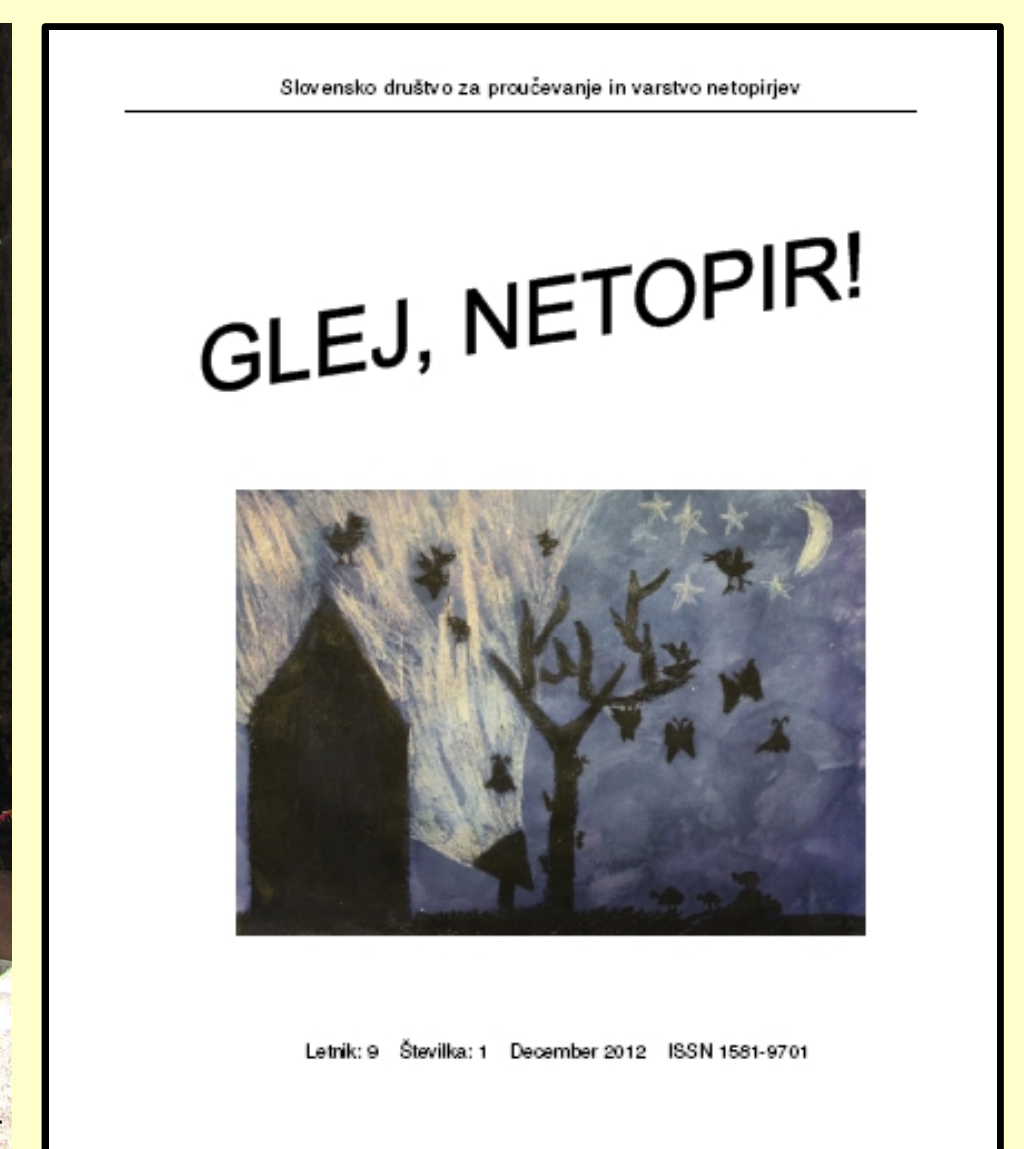
Photo: Archive KS Vrhnika



Photo: Alenka Petrinjak



Photo: Maja Zagmajster



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Public lectures and evening observations of bats with bat detectors at the roosts are just two activities that members of SDPVN and many volunteers conduct to raise public awareness about bats. The highest concentration of such actions in Slovenia is realized every year in start of September during the International Bat Nights.

The role of the volunteers at achieving the goals of the project Life at Night as well other bat protection activities in Slovenia is of greatest importance! Occasionally, informal gatherings after field work, where volunteers could discuss their bat field work experiences, are organised. The reports about work activities and experiences, as well as educating and public awareness activities, are published in the SDPVN annual newspaper "Glej, netopir!" (translated as Look, the bat!).



[www.sdpvn-drustvo.si](http://www.sdpvn-drustvo.si)