

Identification and Protection of Bat Caves in Fars province (Southern Iran)

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ABSTRACT

Due to the almost constant internal conditions of cave terminal region, it is considered as one of the most important habitat for bats. The main cause of bats population decline is habitat loss. So cave protection is necessary for bat conservation. In present study, 36 caves in 4 climates of Fars province (southern Iran) were selected, and examined in different seasons. The climate condition and cave properties were recorded at each visit. 15 species belonged to 8 genus and 7 families of bats were identified in the examined caves, and their diversity and density were reported. The most caves were in temperate (44.4%) and warm regions (36%) respectively. 38% of total caves had a high variety and population of bats and there were large and deep caves which were out of access. The greatest density and diversity of bat, also were in the warm (100%) and temperate regions (93 %), and the least (13.3%) in very hot region. Drought in research region, water shortage, human interference in ecosystems and their harassment in caves have threatened bat population. According to the results, it can be argued that Fars Province is an appropriate habitat for bats. So, its caves must be principally protected.

Keywords: bat, biodiversity, conservation, habitat loss, population density