



PRESS RELEASE

No: 35/2017

Date: 23rd January 2017

The Gibraltar Museum attends VI SECEMU bat conservation and research conference in Portugal

Scientists from the Gibraltar Museum recently attended the VI SECEMU bat conservation and research conference in Vairão, Portugal. The two day conference is held biannually by SECEMU, the Spanish Association for the Conservation and Study of Bats (Asociación Española para la Conservación y el Estudio de los Murciélagos) and was for the first time held outside of Spain at the CIBIO-InBIO Research Centre in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources in Vairão.

Stewart Finlayson and Tyson Lee Holmes joined over 90 researchers in Vairão with a common objective: Studying the unique characteristics of the Iberian bat populations. Researchers working with bats attended and participated in talks on projects which are being carried out at a European and Iberian level. The conference was the first of its kind to be set in an Iberian context and was an excellent opportunity to foster further links between scientific communities in Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar.

The team also took the opportunity to meet with various colleagues from different collaborating institutions to discuss the Gib-Bats project, the team's results, and to plan the way forward in 2017.

'We are currently setting up an extremely promising and exciting project with our colleagues from Spain and institutions in North Africa', explained Stewart. 'We are planning to look into the key question of cross-Strait movement or migration of bats, something which to date has not been clearly proven. We are looking at the field of genetics to see if we can find any links between the North African populations and the Iberian populations. 2017 will see plenty of DNA sampling taking place on both sides of the Strait and plenty of analysis work going on in our laboratory here at the Gibraltar Museum as well as at our collaborating institutions'. It was also an excellent opportunity for the team to discuss the use of new technologies which are coming through. Tyson explains; 'Microchips, similar to those used on household pets are starting to be used by our colleagues in the North of Spain, replacing traditional rings, and these are delivering amazing results. 2017 is going to be an interesting time with regards to understanding the complex nature of these amazing mammals.'

Stewart Finlayson and Tyson Lee Holmes are both founding members of Gib-Bats. Gib-Bats is a scientific study of bats in Gibraltar working towards their conservation and for the protection of their roosts and run as a collaborating of the Gibraltar Museum, the Gibraltar



Ornithological & Natural History Society with the support of the Department of the Environment and Climate Change.

For further information on the project:

Web: www.gib-bats.com

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