



PRESS RELEASE

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Minister Cortes to launch an international Conference on Bat Research and Conservation in the Iberian Peninsula, hosted by the Gibraltar National Museum

The Gibraltar National Museum will be hosting a major international conference focusing on bat research and conservation in the Iberian Peninsula. The conference is co-organised with SECEMU, which is a non-profit organisation that has been active in bat research and conservation in Spain since 1989. It has recently opened up to accept members from Portugal and Gibraltar with the intention of creating a pan-Iberian association. In this light, the association held its last biennial conference in Vairão, Portugal in 2016 which attracted almost 100 delegates from Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar with a common goal: an interest in bats and the unique characteristics of the Iberian populations. Delegates included researchers, ecologists, conservationists, managers and students not only from Iberia but also from across Europe and North Africa. This last conference was the first SECEMU event to have been held outside Spain in an Iberian context and it is now followed by the event being held in Gibraltar.

The Hon. John Cortes MP MBE JP will be launching this year's conference at 15:00 on Friday 7th December at the University of Gibraltar. With over 100 delegates from 12 different countries already signed up, the Gibraltar conference will be a great forum for communication and learning for all involved and that it will continue to open doors for collaboration on bat research and conservation projects within and between Iberian countries and beyond.

Ecologist Dr Rodrigo Medellín of the National Autonomous University of Mexico will be the keynote speaker for this event which will take the form of a free public lecture within the conference proceedings at the University of Gibraltar. Dr Medellín is a big name in wildlife conservation, particularly in the field of bats, jaguars, bighorn sheep and ocelots among others. He works at the Institute of Ecology of the National Autonomous University of Mexico and has worked for the American Museum of Natural History and been an ambassador for the International Union for Conservation of Nature. He was recently featured in a BBC Natural World documentary entitled '*The Bat Man of Mexico*' which was narrated by Sir David Attenborough and told the story of Dr Medellín's life-long work protecting bats across Mexico.

The documentary trailer is available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p020tnx3>

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Dr Medellín's public lecture entitled '*Ecosystem services provided by bats: What and how to value*', will take place at 18:30 on Friday 7th December at the University of Gibraltar. This lecture is free but pre-booking is essential via enquiries@gibmuseum.gi.

Conference registration is also free for residents of Gibraltar on presentation of a valid ID Card. Register online here: <http://secemu.org/en/registration-vii-secemu-meeting>

For more information contact enquiries@gibmuseum.gi.
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