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## Recapture of a banded Bechstein's bat (Chiroptera, Vespertilionidae) after 16 years: an example of high swarming site fidelity

Running head: High site fidelity in Myotis bechsteinii

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## ABSTRACT:

In late summer and autumn, many species of hibernating temperate bats that form mixed-sex groups visit swarming sites (typically caves or mines). Swarming behaviour is mostly prevalent among bats of the genus *Myotis* and has a crucial role in maintaining gene flow among colonies that are socially isolated and thus demographically independent. This note reports on a recapture record of a Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*) in proximity of the "Grotta Marelli" cave, in the Campo dei Fiori Regional Park (Varese, N Italy). We recaptured a male individual twice, i.e. 3 and 16 years after the first observation, which took place at the same site in 1999. Our observation supports previous studies suggesting that *Myotis* bats are faithful to swarming sites and documents a further record of loyalty to a swarming site, close to the maximum known lifespan (21 years) for *M. bechsteinii* 

Protection and management of swarming sites such as Grotta Marelli has priority importance for bat conservation because of the occurrence and aggregation of different bat species and the role that such sites play in maintaining gene flow and hence genetic diversity.

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