

## Project Update: December 2015

The project has surveyed 42 caves to date. Six of these are nationally significant sites as they support huge colonies of wrinkle-lipped bats (*Chaerephon plicatus*) which may represent >75% of the Cambodian population. These bats eat economically significant quantities of agricultural pests every night and so contribute substantially to food security.

The project has also sampled colonies each month to determine critical reproductive periods. Eight months of sampling have been completed and suggest that *C. plicatus* gives birth twice annually (in April and October), whereas other insectivorous bats give birth once each year (also in April). This is unfortunate as conservation threats also appear to peak in April.

Capacity has been built for research and cave conservation by:

- a) Training cave managers, students and government officials through learning-by-doing;
- b) Developing awareness materials and protocols for guano harvesting. Signboards will be installed at tourist caves and educational posters distributed among communities surrounding the major colonies.



Photo 1. Wrinkle-lipped bat *Chaerephon plicatus*  
© Merlin Tuttle

Photo 2. Evening emergence of *C. plicatus* in west Cambodia © Conor Wall



Photo 3. Project team processing bats in the field  
© Conor Wall