

Project Update: October 2019

We are currently continuing with the first phase of the project, corresponding to the monitoring of bats and obtaining data on the prevalence and intensity of vampire bat attacks in cattle, which will be carried out until the end of December 2019 (Figure 1 and 2). Subsequently, the data analysis phase will continue, which aims to write articles for publication, ending the last phase of the project. Several cattle ranches were visited for several months, and interviews were conducted with the owners, from which data have been obtained that are being analysed for the publication of a manuscript related to the socio-environmental characterisation of the study area and its influence on the problem of the vampire bat in livestock.

We have currently carried out a supervised classification of the study area and the cattle ranches, as well as of the landscape metrics that will be used for the analyses with the data related to the catches of bats, the prevalence and intensity of attacks of the common vampire bat, socio-environmental characterisation of the productive units and the management of cattle herds. The first exploratory analyses indicate a possible relation of the forest cover in the ranches on the prevalence of attacks of the common vampire bat in the cattle, nevertheless, it is necessary to finish the field phase to analyse in detail each one of the variables.

Currently, the project has the participation of two students interested in the topic covered by the project, for which they have been incorporated and are being provided with continuous training in the field phase (Figure 3 and 4). A student will complete his bachelor's thesis with data on bats of the Phyllostomidae family, species that are relatively common to capture with mist nets used in this project.



Figure 1.- Common vampire bat captured.



Figure 2.- Obtaining data on the prevalence and intensity of attacks of the common vampire bat in cattle.



Figure 3.- Students installing a mist net for catching bats.



Figure 4.- Students using field codes for the identification of bats.