



20th November 2011

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION AS A 'BAT GUARDIAN'

By this letter, the Bat Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission recognizes the efforts **Mr. Levi Amadalo Azinwa** and your wife **Beatrice Amadalo** in hosting, and therefore helping in conserving Straw-coloured Fruit Bats *Eidolon helvum* on your farm at Ilwanda Village, Mbale-Western Kenya. Dr. Paul Webala and Mr. Simon Musila from Moi University-Karatina College and National Museums of Kenya, respectively, estimate the colony to consist of about 20,000 bats as at 31st October 2011. This is the largest colony of the species in Kenya. Therefore, this is a letter of recognition as one of the existing '*bats guardians*' in Mbale and the great sacrifice you have made to conserve the bats whilst foregoing your other needs particularly in three ways:

1. **Bat roost conservation through tree planting:** you have planted more than 100 indigenous and exotic trees in your farm, which are now mature enough for timber extraction but you have retained them as roosts for the bats since they migrated to your homestead in 2006; despite constant pleas from your fellow villagers to cut down the trees in order to evict the bats from their compounds as many have done in the general area of Mbale District.
2. **High level of tolerance to large colony of bats:** the large number of bats in your 3-acre farm is associated with a lot of inconvenience such as: noise throughout the day, and large quantities of faecal material from trees dropping over crops. The result is that you have given up growing vegetables for consumption or sale.
3. **Use of alternative source of livelihood compatible to bat conservation:** you have instead resorted to mixed farming (bananas, coffee, cassava, and fruit trees) and dairy farming (with one cow) which are interspersed with grown trees used as roosts by the bats.

There is no question that this exceptionally large colony is of significant ecological importance in the area. As far as the scientists are aware; the colony is by far one the largest remaining in Kenya. The species is exceptionally ecologically important as a primary pollinator and seed disperser of many tropical plants, including many fruit trees and timber trees on which we depend. In short, the bats play critical roles in tropical plant/forest succession, distribution, and community composition and their loss could have very negative ecological consequences locally and regionally. The continued existence of the bats in the area is therefore critical, and your efforts and support in conserving them is greatly appreciated.

Professor Paul A Racey

Co-Chair, IUCN Bat Specialist Group

