



THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSISTENCY AND POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT IN BAT TRAINING



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INTRODUCTION

Despite the importance of animal training for scientific experiments, the information on detailed bat training procedures is still sparse.

Here we present a study case where we train wild **greater mouse-eared bats** (*Myotis myotis*) to perform two different tasks under controlled lab conditions- target approach and prey capture with different noise manipulations.

The data is collected between 2019 and 2022.



METHODS

We used **positive reinforcement** and a **five-stage training protocol**, which when used consistently, build confidence and trust in the animal towards the handler.

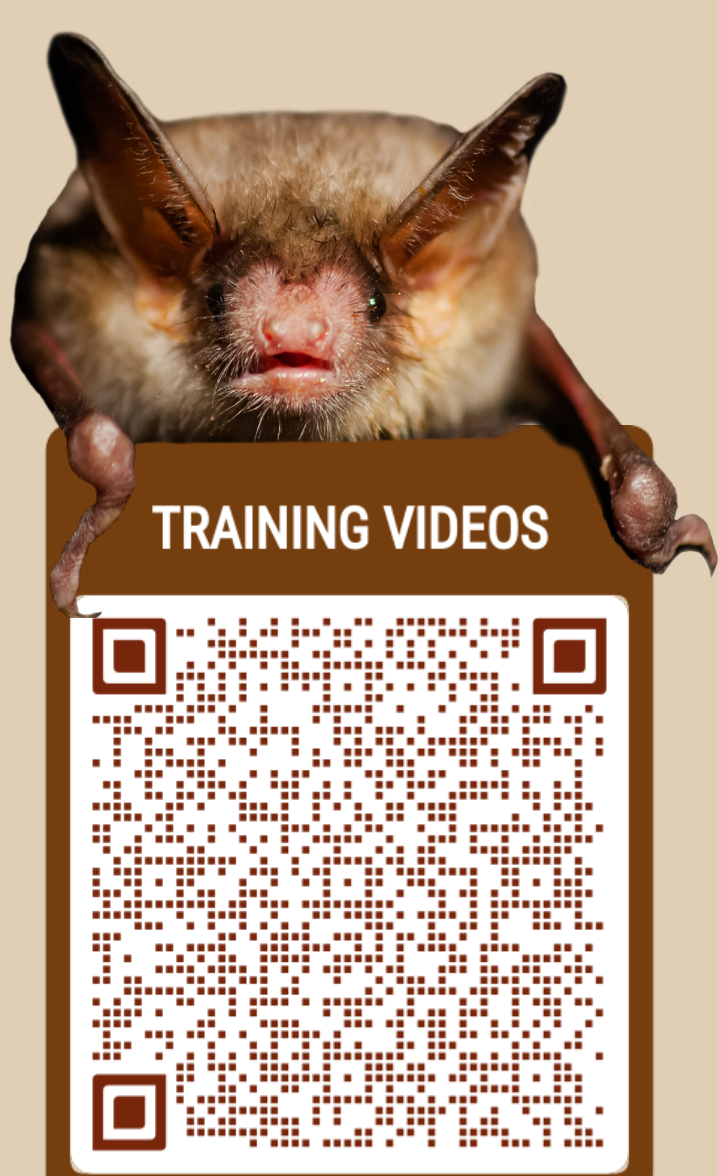
- **desired behaviour** is marked with bridging sound and rewarded with food
- when the bat exhibits **undesired behaviour**, the handler goes a step back, returning the animal to a previous, well-known part of the training

TRAINING PROTOCOL

1. Getting the bat used to feeding in captivity
2. Getting the bat used to the presence of the handler and teaching it to follow their lead with tweezers holding a mealworm. This part is conducted in a small mosquito net tent
3. Releasing the bat in the flight-room & getting it used to the surroundings
4. Presenting the bat to the equipment
5. a/ Getting the bat used to the task (landing on a sphere/catching a moth off a fishing line)
b/ Getting the bat used to sound/movement treatments

CONCLUSION

Using **positive reinforcement** and **structured and consisted training** helps the handlers determine which animals are more suitable for keeping. This also **decreases the overall time of keeping the bats in captivity.**



Want to get in touch?
Have some questions?



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