

# bats



A Lesser Horseshoe Bat B Sutable barn roost C Sutable tree roost D Sutable loft roost E Pipistrelle Bat

**Ecological Survey Seasons**

Surveys optimal
Surveys sub-optimal
Surveys cannot be undertaken/ result unreliable

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Orange	Orange	Orange	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Orange	Orange	Orange

## Legal Protection

All of the sixteen species of bat that are known to be resident within the UK are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 1994 (as amended), and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The protection that bats and their places of rest receive makes it illegal to:-

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat; and

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

The legal protection given to bats stems from the overall decline in bat populations over the last century or so. Some species, such as pipistrelle bats, have remained relatively common; however other species, such as the greater horseshoe, are much less common and have limited distribution.



Lesser Horseshoe Bat



Sutable tree roost



Sutable loft roost

## Ecology

All species of bat that are resident in the UK are small, nocturnal, insectivorous, flying mammals. During the autumn bats gain weight and then, as the air temperature cools, they seek out appropriately sheltered roosts and enter into a dormant state or 'torpor'. This state, also called hibernation, allows bats to reduce their energy requirements when insects are scarce. Suitable hibernation roost sites are those that have a stable, mild temperature during the winter months such as caves, tunnels and buildings; some trees may also be suitable.

Bats re-form into their colonies when weather conditions become suitable. Bat colonies can consist of small or large numbers of bats, sometimes hundreds of bats, of mixed age and sex. Suitable roost sites include trees, buildings and bridges.

During active periods, bats will normally leave their roost at around dusk to forage and will continue to

feed for most of the night. During foraging bats will sometimes rest in temporary night roosts or feeding roosts. These places of rest are often marked by small piles of droppings and feeding remains, such as moth wings.

Suitable foraging areas including grassland, hedges, watercourses, woodland and ponds are often several kilometres away from the roost site. Generally, research has shown that bats follow linear features both when foraging and commuting to and from foraging grounds.

During the autumn months, dominant male bats create solitary roosts in order to attract females for mating. Then during the following spring/summer period female bats gather into maternity roosts to give birth and rear the young. Once the young are independent, the bat colony generally breaks up with individuals moving to other roosts.

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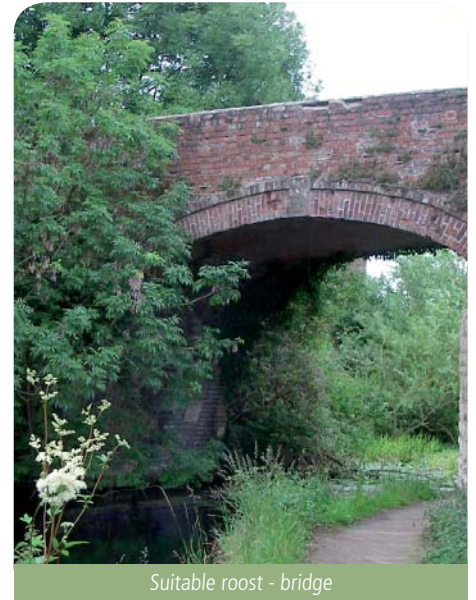
## Are bats likely to be present?

Bat species may be present within any site that has habitat that may be suitable for use during roosting, foraging or commuting. There are several survey methods in common use that can determine whether bats may be present within a site. These methods are as follows:

- Looking for evidence of roosting bats including droppings, feeding remains, urine stains, areas swept free of cobwebs and live or dead bats;
- Use of ultrasonic detectors that pick up the echolocation of bats and translate it into a sound audible to the human ear; and
- Assessing the potential that trees may have to accommodate roosting bats.



Bat detector



Suitable roost - bridge



Bat box

## Implications for development

If the potential for bats is identified within a site, detailed surveys are required during the spring or autumn. Surveys will need to be undertaken in line with the BCT Bat Survey Guidelines (July 2007). If bats are confirmed to be present within a site, an assessment to its likely importance for bats can be undertaken.

Where roosts may be affected, a development licence must be obtained from the appropriate statutory body. Licences can be granted to 'preserve public health or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'.

To ensure the favourable conservation status of bats is not compromised, a mitigation strategy must

be produced in liaison with the relevant statutory body. Mitigation may involve the protection and management of roosting, foraging and commuting habitat as well as enhancement and creation of habitats including roosting and hibernation opportunities.



Lesser Horseshoe Bat

