

BAT SPECIES ACTION PLAN



Introduction



Brown long-eared bat: Bat Conservation Trust

From approximately April to November bats are active. During this time the males live individually or in small groups, whilst the females of a particular species within a local area gather into maternity roosts, where they give birth to their single young. During the winter, bats generally hibernate as their insect food is unavailable. Although they may travel some distance between summer roosts, winter roosts and feeding sites, and utilise several different roost sites, they repeatedly use the same sites year after year.

Status

National

Sixteen species of bat breed in the UK.

Regional

Nine species of bat have been recorded in North Yorkshire. These are listed below, together with their estimated UK populations.

● Lesser horseshoe	14,000
● Whiskered	70,000 combined
● Brandt's	
● Daubenton's	150,000
● Natterer's	100,000

● Common pipistrelle	2,000,000
● Soprano pipistrelle	combined
● Noctule	50,000
● Brown long-eared	200,000

Local

Eight of these species are found in Hambleton District. The ninth species, the lesser horseshoe bat, is thought to be extinct in the county, but was last recorded from the western edge of the North York Moors National Park, immediately adjacent to the Hambleton District boundary, in the 1980s.

Requirements

- A variety of maternity and hibernation sites, including modern housing, older buildings, bridges, hollow trees, caves and tunnels.
- No disturbance.
- Building work to be undertaken when roosts are vacant.
- Safe timber treatment chemicals.
- Continuous wildlife corridors.
- Varied mix of habitats.

- Rich sources of insects.
- Livestock farming, with associated dung fauna, for lesser horseshoe bats.
- Bat boxes where natural roost sites are infrequent.
- Good publicity.

Current Action

- Bats receive protection under a range of conventions and directives, in particular the Bern Convention, the European Community Habitats Directive, the Bonn Convention and the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe. They are protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations, 1994 and Schedules 5 and 6 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981, as incorporated by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act, 2000.
- The Bat Conservation Trust, with the support of Government agencies and volunteers, are carrying out monitoring of selected pipistrelle and lesser horseshoe maternity roosts, and conducting other surveys to monitor population trends for pipistrelle, noctule, Natterer's and Daubenton's bats, under the auspices of the National Bat Monitoring Programme.
- The National Bat Colony Survey continues to monitor population changes by encouraging householders with bat roosts in their property to count their bats each summer.
- Conservation issues are covered in the Species Conservation Handbook produced by English



*Pipistrelle bat: Peter Waterton
Nature.*

- Volunteer licensed bat workers carry out visits on behalf of English Nature to provide advice to householders concerned about bats.
- The North Yorkshire Bat Group organises public walks, talks, exhibitions and surveys to foster a public understanding of bats and their conservation requirements.
- Hambleton District Wide Local Plan (1999) policies NCI, NC4, NC5, NC6 and NC7 are relevant.
- North Yorkshire County Council arranges surveys in advance of proposed bridge works.

Threats

- The loss of traditional sites may threaten the survival of species within the area. Typical roost sites for those species found in Hambleton are listed below.
- Reduction in insect prey abundance, due to current farming practice and inappropriate riparian management.
- Loss of insect-rich feeding habitats and flyways, due to loss and fragmentation of habitats including woodlands, wetlands, hedgerows and other suitable prey habitats.
- Loss of hibernation sites in buildings and old trees and disturbance in underground sites such as caves and disused tunnels.
- Disturbance and destruction of roosts, including the loss of maternity roosts due to the use of toxic timber treatment chemicals, unsympathetic renovation, demolition and dereliction.
- Breaks of ten metres or more in wildlife corridors.

Table 1: Typical roost sites in Hambleton District.

Species	Summer	Winter
Lesser horseshoe	Large, old buildings	Caves
Whiskered Brandt's	Buildings and probably trees	Caves
Daubenton's	Tree holes, bridges and buildings	Caves, tunnels and other underground sites
Natterer's	Buildings, usually older & larger properties, trees	Caves, tunnels and other underground sites
Noctule	Hollow trees, sometimes buildings and bridges	Hollow trees
Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle	Buildings, including modern houses, trees	Disused buildings, behind sheltered boards, etc. Rarely underground.
Brown long-eared	Older buildings with large roof spaces, trees	Caves, tunnels and other underground sites.

Other Possible Partners

- Bat Conservation Trust
- Environment Agency
- English Nature
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
- Lower Ure Conservation Trust
- Rural Development Service
- Swale and Ure Washlands Project

Objective

To manage the countryside in ways that favour bats, and to maintain existing populations and the geographical range of all species at least at current levels.

Targets

1. Give guidance on and raise awareness of bat issues.
2. Identify five locations where areas of good foraging habitat are fragmented, and establish hedgerow links between them to encourage bat dispersal.
3. Provide roost sites by initiating two bat box schemes.
4. Provide two new opportunities for bats to colonise structures.
5. Survey and protect bats during work to buildings and structures.
6. Increase understanding of bat ecology.

Actions

	Partners	Target No.
Policy and Legislation		
Prepare best practice guidance notes regarding bats and development, to aid Development Control and Conservation Officers.		1
Support any lobbying initiatives regarding the needs of bats in land management incentive schemes, such as CS.	NYCC	1
Site Safeguard and Management		
Identify suitable sites for linking fragmented habitat by working with landowners.	NEYEDC	2
Identify suitable locations for schemes to erect bat boxes by working with local communities.		3
Undertake bat surveys prior to building maintenance carried out on Council buildings.	NYCC	5
Undertake bat surveys prior to road bridge repairs.	NYCC	5
Identify suitable opportunities to provide bridges or buildings with openings for bats, by working with local authorities and developers.	NYCC	4

Research and Monitoring

Organise a recording scheme for householders with bat roosts to take part in national monitoring programs. 6

Organise a survey of known bat roosts to determine species present, distribution and ecological requirements. NEYEDC SUWP 6

Set up monitoring programme to assess the success of the bat box schemes. 6

Advisory

Send guidance on the inclusion of bat access features into new buildings, to architect firms. 1,4

Send guidance to arboricultural firms, Parish Councils, Parks officers and planning officers, on the importance of mature trees to bats. 1

Communications and Publicity

Produce articles/information discouraging the use of slow release ivermectins as cattle wormers. NYBG DEFRA 1

Produce articles/information on the importance that buildings have to bats, encouraging a pride in having a bat colony within a building. NYBG 1,5

Produce articles/information encouraging the use of bat friendly timber treatment chemicals. NYBG 1,5

Produce articles/information on the importance and retention of old trees for bats. NYBG 1

Promote bats and their conservation through events, including exhibitions, walks and talks. BTCV 1

The LUCT and SUWP have both indicated that they are willing partners for this Action Plan where appropriate. EN has also made it known that they can help in the planning process but don't have a grant scheme for bats unless there is an SSSI.

