

Bat Conservation Trust



The Bat Crime Annual Report 2014



The Bat Crime Annual Report 2014

Summary

The Bat Crime Annual Report 2014 outlines and analyses both incidents and outcomes of the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Investigations Project over the 12 months from 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2014.

BCT referred 159 allegations of bat crimes to the police in 2014, more than in any previous year and a 30% increase on referrals in 2013. During the same period BCT ceased recording all allegations received in relation to bat crime. The reasons for this are outlined in the main body of the report.

Contents

Bat Crime Annual Report 2014.....	1
1. Introduction: Why are bats in need of protection?	2
2. About the Investigations Project	3
3. UK Wildlife Crime Priorities and the National Wildlife Crime Unit.....	4
4. Legislation	5
5. Incidents notified to BCT in 2014	6
5.1 Reporting of Incidents.....	6
5.2 Incidents by police area	6
5.3 International incidents	7
Case Study 1	7
5.4 Incidents by month	7
5.5 Primary offences	9
6. How the police dealt with incidents.....	10
6.1 Completed no further action.	10
6.2 Ongoing	11
6.3 Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decision.....	11
6.4 Formal caution	11
Case Study 2.....	12
7. Prosecutions.....	13
7.1 Burden of proof	13
7.2 Evidence of roosts	13
7.3 Offenders acting on advice	13
7.4 Identification of offenders	13
7.5 Time limits	14
Case Studies 3 & 4.....	14
8. Future work	15

1. Introduction: Why are bats in need of protection?

There are currently 18 species of bat present in the UK (17 of which are known to be breeding). The long-term decline in natural roost sites means that bats more than ever are highly dependent on human-made structures such as houses, churches and barns for roosting, and on the surrounding habitats for foraging and commuting.

A reliance on human-made structures means that bats are particularly vulnerable to development and general building works, including but not limited to, conversions, demolitions, and timber treatment and maintenance activities in buildings.

Species of bat have unique requirements for raising their young and maternity roosts are essential for this. On average a female bat will have only one baby per year, with some not breeding at all. The loss of a maternity roost can be devastating and can even result in all the breeding females from an area being unable to rear young in that year. The problem can be made worse in future years if there are no suitable alternative roosts nearby.

Historical studies have shown that bat populations declined considerably between the 1950s and 1980s across Europe, including the UK. It is for this reason that all 18 bat species in the UK and their roosts are now protected by European and national law. It is therefore an offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
- damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat; or
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

In last year's Bat Crime Annual Report we were able to report a reduction in bat-related crimes from 134 in 2012 to 121 in 2013. Sadly this trend has not continued and in 2014 BCT referred 159 incidents of bat related crime to the police.

Anecdotal evidence from bat workers, the general public, and building and forestry professionals suggests that these figures continue to represent only a small proportion of the total number of bat crimes committed.

Of those referred to the police, the building development and maintenance sector accounted for the vast majority of the bat-related crimes in 2014. This is in line with findings from previous years.

2. About the Investigations Project

The Investigations Project has been working to prevent bat crime since its inception in 2001 as collaboration between RSPB and the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT). Since then the Investigations Project has developed and is now based wholly within the Bat Conservation Trust, supported by local bat groups and BCT staff. A part-time Investigations Officer Pete Charleston has led the project since 2010.

The current priorities for BCT's Investigations Project are:

- Recording of bat related crime;
- Providing support, training and advice for the police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), SNCOs and bat workers to ensure incidents are reported, investigated, and the law enforced i.e. prosecutions are taken forward where appropriate;
- Targeting the groups and sectors that perpetrate bat related crime for education and awareness raising initiatives, such as the production of best practice guidelines to improve work practices;
- Improve areas of UK policy, in particular those that relate to planning and species licensing, to reduce opportunities for ignoring the legislative protection given to bats.

3. UK wildlife crime priorities and the National Wildlife Crime Unit

In 2004 persecution of bats was identified by the statutory conservation agencies as a wildlife crime priority for the police. The statutory agencies also stated that crimes committed against bats were of equal significance to other wildlife crime priorities, including the persecution of birds of prey and the illegal trade in endangered species. Wildlife crime priorities are reviewed annually, and in 2014 bat crime was once again identified as an area of concern.

During 2014 the BCT has continued to work closely with the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU), providing intelligence on all incidents referred for investigation. The most recent National Wildlife Crime Strategic Threat Assessment acknowledged the BCT as the unit's primary source of intelligence relating to bat crime. A copy of the threat assessment can be accessed at:

<http://www.nwcu.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/NWCU-Strategic-Assessment-2013-final-v2.pdf>

BCT's position as the country's leading authority on bat crime would not be possible without the support of its local groups. To help us provide a comprehensive assessment of alleged bat crimes in the UK we once again ask that our local bat groups and other interested groups continue to provide us with information about any offences or other suspicious behaviour.

4. Legislation

The BCT is committed to improving the knowledge and understanding of those responsible for the legal protection of bats.

In 2014 the BCT delivered training sessions to the police at both the National Wildlife Crime Foundation and to individual groups of police forces.

For some time investigations into bat crime have been complicated by the fact that planning permission is often granted without first considering the results of a bat survey.

Conditions are sometimes attached to a planning permission requiring that a bat survey is conducted at some point during the development; however it is rare that such a survey is requested before permission is granted.

In 2009 a court judgment ruled that any planning application likely to have an impact on bats should not be considered without first conducting a bat survey to determine the level of risk. In the event that planning permission is granted without such a survey the approval may be later deemed invalid if the development is shown to have an impact on local bat populations. BCT continue to monitor the situation carefully and is working to ensure the 2009 judgement is acted upon by all local planning authorities.

BCT also continues to input into Law Commission's ongoing review of wildlife crime legislation and looks forward to publication of the commission's recommendations.

5. Incidents notified to BCT in 2014

BCT referred 159 bat-related crimes to the police in 2014, more than any previous year and an increase of over 30% on the 121 referrals made in 2013.

In 2014 BCT made the decision to cease the recording of all allegations of bat crime on our investigations database. Considerable volunteer effort is required to record these incidents with less than half referred to the police for investigation. BCT is now recording only those incidents that have been investigated by our investigations officer. This includes all referrals to enforcement agencies.

Until 2010 all criminal offences relating to bats were investigated by the police and prosecuted by the Crown Prosecution Service. Natural England has now decided to utilise powers granted to them by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to investigate and, where necessary, prosecute offences relating to breaches of bat licence conditions. In the remainder of the UK allegations of bat crimes are still referred to the police for investigation.

5.1 Reporting of Incidents

BCT received more reports of bat crimes in 2014 than in any previous year.

It is difficult to know if the increase in recorded incidents is as a direct result of a rise in the incidence of bat crime, or whether it is because more crimes are being reported.

BCT and local bat groups are now more recognised and with links improving between BCT and enforcement agencies the rise in the number of reported incidents may be explained by the ease with which bat crime can now be reported. However, the number of reports received is still only a fraction of the number of incidents that involve bats.

Having established regular contact with the National Wildlife Crime Unit the BCT is confident that it is aware of most of the incidents of bat crime currently investigated by the police. However, because of legislative restrictions, we do not always receive full details of bat crimes. Furthermore there is no obligation on authorities to consult with us. It is for this reason that close contact between bat groups, bat workers and the BCT is crucial if an informed view of the levels of bat crime is to be presented.

Many reports received by the BCT that disclose the possibility of criminal activity are submitted by builders and householders who have come across bats whilst carrying out work on their property. The BCT choose not to refer the majority of these reports to the statutory agencies because the conservation interest of bats outweighs any benefit that might be gained from a criminal investigation.

Builders and householders that call the BCT to report a bat disturbance or minor damage are usually seeking advice about what to do. Most callers in this situation are receptive to the advice provided.

If the BCT were to refer these calls to the police it could discourage members of the public from seeking advice in the future and ultimately the conservation of bats would suffer.

Every call the BCT receives that identifies the possibility of an offence is screened to ensure inappropriate cases are referred for investigation. Even though the BCT does not refer all incidents for investigation, no suggestion of criminal offence is allowed to pass without being commented upon. Additionally, the BCT will make written or oral contact with the investigating officer in every case that is referred for investigation to offer legislative and investigative advice.

Bat Helpline staff act on behalf of Natural England to provide both oral and written advice and it is often the case that the BCT will invite local bat groups and volunteer bat workers to become further involved. With pressure for development increasing it is likely that the support the BCT provide to Natural England in this area will become ever more relied upon.

5.2 Incidents by police area

The number of incidents reported varied across the UK. Of the 159 incidents referred to the police last year, 138 were referred to English police forces, 10 to Police Scotland and 11 to Welsh forces.

The geographic spread of reported cases was wide, with incidents referred to 40 of the 45 police forces in the United Kingdom. This means that on average each police force is asked to investigate fewer than four bat crimes annually. This goes some way to explaining why investigative experience in this area is limited.

It also underlines the importance of the advice and guidance BCT provides to police forces across the country, many of whom do not have the expertise necessary to investigate the allegations they receive.

For the first time Devon and Cornwall Police did not receive the most referrals of any police force. The Metropolitan Police and Police Scotland received the largest number of referrals with ten each. Eight referrals were made to Devon and Cornwall Police and 7 to Essex Police.

Seven other forces each received six referrals.

When interpreting the figures for Scotland it should be remembered that in previous years referrals were made to one of eight forces, all of whom have now amalgamated into Police Scotland.

The variation in numbers of referrals can often be explained by factors such as the density of bat populations; the extent of development in those areas; the strength of the relationship between BCT, the local bat group and the police force; a greater awareness amongst police officers of the issues; and the confidence of the public in reporting such matters to the police.

5.3 International incidents

On occasion BCT is made aware of the possibility of criminal offences overseas. However these can be difficult to refer to the police for investigation because they cannot be linked to an area covered by a specific UK force. In the past 12 months there have been a number of such issues that, because of the difficulties outlined, have been dealt with by BCT's Investigations Officer.

Trade in dead bats is an issue often brought to our attention. Such trade may take place on Internet auction sites or at markets and is usually (but not always) found to involve species that are not legally protected.

The advertisement of sonic deterrents to clear bats from domestic properties and the offer of advice on how to exclude bats from buildings continues to be an issue. Of the cases investigated by BCT it has been established that all of the offending websites offering such technologies or advice are of North American origin, where bats do not receive the same level of protection. In these cases contact is made with the companies involved usually resulting in statements being placed on both sites pointing out the protected status of bats in the UK.

Case study 1

During 2014 BCT became aware of a gel substance being offered for sale on the Internet by a company based in North America. It was suggested that the product could be used to deter bats and other mammals from using particular areas of a building. Contact was made with the company offering the product explaining that the use of such a product in the UK against bats would be a criminal offence. Normally such contact with suppliers outside the UK results in an apology and a caveat being added to advertisements explaining the UK position. However in this instance the supplier said that they would continue to offer the product for sale unless it was an offence to sell it in the UK – it is not.

Given the response to our contact the issue called for a different approach. We researched the product and were able to establish that it contained chemicals that had not been approved for use in the UK. Contact with Natural England and the Food and Environment Research Agency led to the supplier being informed that, for this reason it is illegal to import the product into the UK.

5.4 Incidents by month

Figure 1 below shows there are peak months for numbers of incidents being reported. Bats are most active between the months of March and October, which coincides with a peak in development activity. It should not come as any surprise therefore that most incidents of bat crime reported to the BCT take place during peak times of bat activity.

Similarly, comparisons of the activities taking place in reported incidents show that development remains the primary cause of offences. These are detailed in Table 2.

A more detailed analysis of the activities relating to development has identified four main areas of activity: development, maintenance, roofing and land clearance. Percentages for these categories are detailed in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Incidents referred for investigation by month

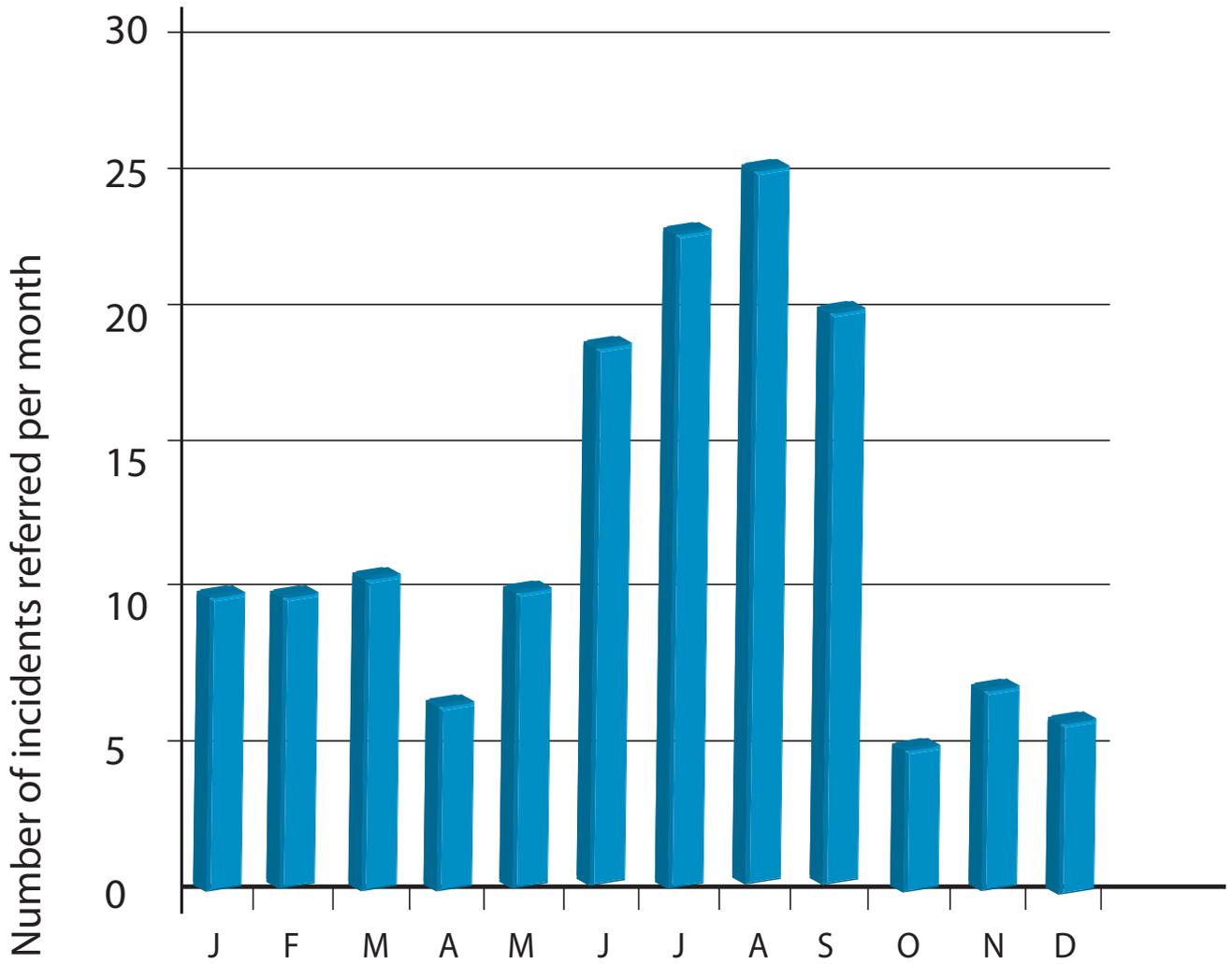
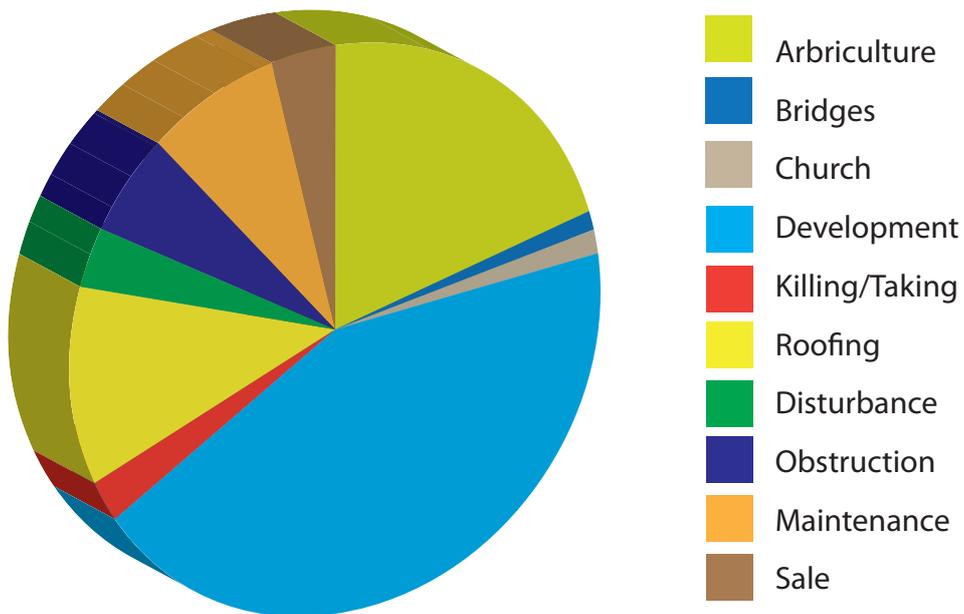


Figure 2 Comparison of incidents categorised by activity

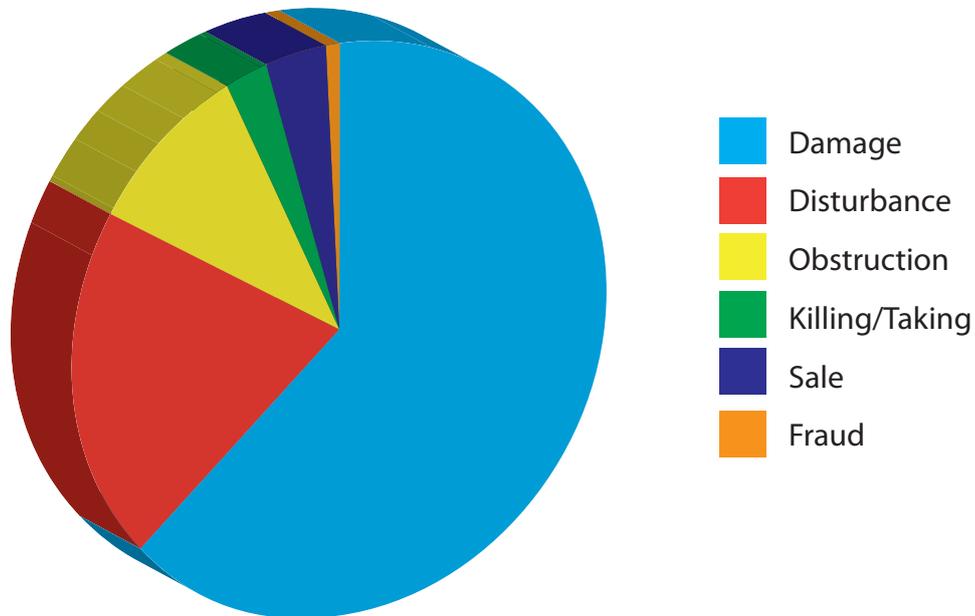


5.5 Primary offences

The identification of primary offences (the main or most serious offence identified in any allegation) can often be a subjective process: instances of roost damage and obstructing access can also reveal offences of disturbance, whereas a killing offence will almost undoubtedly have arisen from an instance of roost destruction.

Figure 3 details the types of offences referred to the police during 2014 and categorises them into primary offence type. The largest proportion of incidents reported related to damage or disturbance. The percentage of sales incidents is not considered to be a true reflection of the actual amount of trade being undertaken, particularly on Internet auction sites.

Figure 3. Incidents reported to the police in 2014 categorised by offence type



6. How the police dealt with incidents

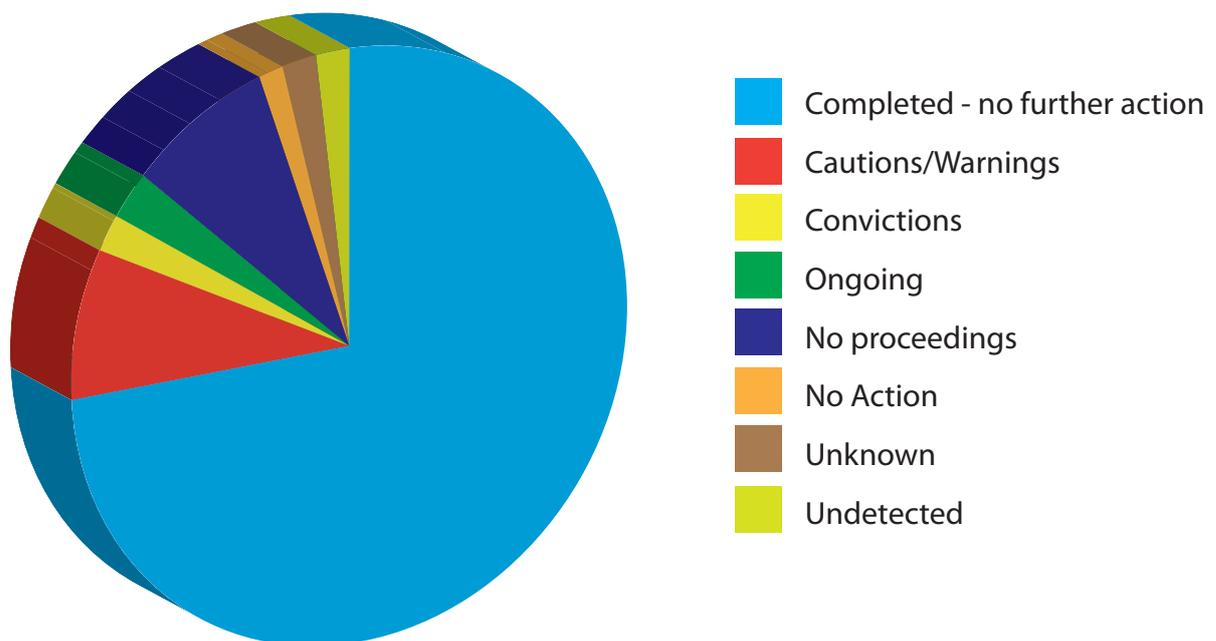
This section outlines the outcome of cases reported to the police in 2014, also known as case disposal. Whenever the BCT refer an incident to the police our Investigations Officer will, wherever possible, make contact with the relevant investigating officer and offers advice and assistance. Contact is maintained with those police officers until such time that BCT are advised of the result of the investigation

All incidences reported to the police should be dealt with in a broadly similar manner. Decisions as to what action is taken will be made having regard to a number of factors and this can result in offenders or suspects being dealt with in different ways. Whereas police officers have discretion as to how to deal with individual cases, the BCT strives to ensure that investigating officers are able to make informed decisions on the best way to deal with bat crime.

If a police officer feels that there is sufficient evidence to bring a prosecution, papers will be sent to the CPS so that a decision about whether to bring such a prosecution can be made. CPS prosecutors will first consider if there is a reasonable prospect of conviction, if there is they will then decide on whether it is in the public interest to bring the prosecution. The public interest test may lead to offenders being formally cautioned or warned rather than prosecuted.

The BCT is broadly satisfied with the direction that statutory agencies are taking in relation to bat crime. Police forces demonstrate a professional and effective response to bat crimes in the majority of cases and this deserves to be recognised.

Figure 4 How the police dealt with incidents.



6.1 Completed no further action

The fact that an incident is closed with no further action being required often disguises the fact that valuable crime prevention work has taken place, which can make an important contribution to the longer-term protection of bats and their roosts.

To ensure knowledge of and future compliance with the law, the BCT aims for its investigating officer to contact all potential suspects in any incident. The fact that advice has been given would be taken into account should further offences be committed.

In many cases the intervention of the police can act as an important deterrent. In 2014 for example 118 of the total of 159 referred incidents resulted in no formal action being taken. Given that in the majority of cases advice will have been provided by a Police Officer, the BCT can justifiably claim that a much larger number of offences were prevented. Those

considering committing or commissioning an offence will have second thoughts once they know that the police have an interest in the matter. For this reason it is very important that contact with the police is initiated as soon as there are suspicions that an offence has been committed or may be committed. Regular contact has to be continued until the incident has been closed.

In some instances insufficient evidence is found by the investigating officer to warrant further action. Most commonly this was as a result of an allegation of a roost being damaged or destroyed but sufficient evidence not being available to support the allegation.

Regrettably once again in 2014, the BCT received a small number of allegations where it was suggested that development work was being undertaken that would impact on bat populations. Basic enquiries revealed that either bat roosts were present but were not being properly considered or that there was simply no evidence to support the allegations being made.

In order for the BCT to remain credible with developers, the organisation needs to ensure that it does not become involved with people motivated to oppose development and seeking to raise unjustified concerns relating to bats. To this end BCT staff spend a considerable amount of time carrying out background enquiries to establish if there is a prima facie case that should be referred for investigation.

6.2 Ongoing

At present there are 7 investigations from 2014 or earlier that are either on-going or for which the BCT have not been advised of the result. Some of those cases, we know are subject to on-going investigations or criminal prosecutions. Generally, police investigations into bat crime should be completed within six months. However, legislation states that prosecutions relating to bat offences must be taken up within two years of the date the offences were committed. In such circumstances it would be expected that any delay in concluding an investigation would be attributable to the offender rather than the police.

6.3 Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decision

Two incidents in 2014 resulted in papers being submitted to prosecutors for a decision as to whether to take a case further. In both cases prosecutors directed against further action on the basis that there was insufficient evidence to secure a conviction.

The past twelve months have seen the CPS undertake a review of the way in which they consider wildlife crime. As a result specialist wildlife crime prosecutors have now been identified in every CPS area. It is now likely that a prosecutor with some specialist knowledge will review every file of papers submitted for consideration of prosecution of bat offences. Additionally a national lead for bat offences has also been appointed. The BCT very much welcomes this and has made contact with a number of the new wildlife crime prosecutors. In addition we were pleased to be invited to attend and provide a presentation to the first ever CPS wildlife crime training course.

6.4 Formal caution

In 2014 there were 13 incidents where investigating and/or prosecuting officers took the view that whilst there was sufficient evidence of offences against bats to prove a criminal case the public interest did not justify prosecution. Often such cases relate to instances where the offence appears to have been committed accidentally with little or no conservation impact and a willingness to make amends.

In such cases it is possible for a case to be dealt with outside the criminal justice system, most commonly by an offender being formally cautioned or accepting restorative justice (also known as community resolution). Because these processes lie outside the Criminal Justice System details cannot be made public.

A formal caution is not a criminal conviction; however it is noted on formal records and can be referred to should further offences be committed. The cautioned person is required to accept that if the matter had gone to court they would have been found guilty. Whereas a formal caution may be of some value in being available for future consideration, it does not provide any conservation benefit.

Restorative justice is a policing initiative whereby officers are encouraged to exercise discretion and deal with minor criminal offences outside of the criminal justice system. The use of restorative justice to deal with bat crimes has become more common since it was first used in 2010.

Offenders dealt with through restorative justice do not gain a criminal record. This type of disposal does allow for conservation gain and is now sometimes used with the support of the BCT.

Case study 2

During the winter of 2013/ 2014 a housing association undertook work re-roofing a number of properties they owned, one of which was known to contain a brown long eared bat maternity roost. The work which included re-tiling and the use of a non-porous roofing membrane was undertaken without a licence allowing for the roost to be damaged or destroyed having been issued by Natural England.

The matter was reported to the Police who investigated the matter. In interview representatives of the housing association readily admitted the offence saying that there had been a breakdown in communication between themselves and their contractors. They expressed remorse and indicated that they wished to make amends for their error.

The investigating officer in this case took the view that it would not be in the public interest to prosecute the housing association feeling that the matter could be dealt with through restorative justice. In order to escape prosecution the new roof was removed from the address, an approved roof membrane was installed and the roof re-tiled for the second time. The work was undertaken to a satisfactory standard with access to the roost being retained.

7. Prosecutions

Of the 159 cases referred to the police in 2014, the evidence available does not suggest that any other prosecutions should have been pursued. Analysis of the manner in which cases have been disposed of reveals that across the UK police forces find that 1 in 7 investigations into an alleged bat crime result in a confirmation of offences having been committed.

From a bat conservation perspective it is important to assess how well legislation is being complied with and how many bat crimes have been prevented. With this in mind 2014 must be considered to be another successful year, with evidence to suggest that many offences have been prevented with potential offenders having instead chosen to comply with the law.

Despite the effort directed into preventing offences, an occasional incident will occur where it seems that a serious offence has taken place and the only recourse is for the offenders to be sanctioned by a court. In 2014 there were five prosecutions for bat crime resulting in four convictions. Some of the prosecutions related to incidents that had taken place in previous years.

7.1 Burden of proof

Bat crimes are criminal offences and for a conviction to be gained the case must be proven beyond all reasonable doubt. Any question of doubt will normally result in acquittal. The CPS will not prosecute a case unless they are satisfied that there is a reasonable prospect of conviction. Prosecutions will not be taken unless this evidential test is passed and it is also considered to be in the public interest to proceed.

7.2 Evidence of roosts

One of the most common problems faced by investigating officers is that of evidencing the presence of a bat roost. Many allegations suggesting that developers have destroyed roosts are made, but often no evidence of a roost is available if a bat survey has not been undertaken as part of the planning process. For this reason, whilst recognising the resource implications the BCT would suggest that surveys of vulnerable sites should wherever possible be conducted on an annual basis. A survey carried out more than 12 months previously can be undermined by another more recent survey suggesting that the roost is no longer used.

7.3 Offenders acting on advice

There appears to be an increasing number of incidents where potential offenders when interviewed have said that they acted on the advice of others, for example, their ecological consultants. Most commonly this seems to relate to work that involves damage to a roost where advice has been provided to the effect that the work can be carried out without the need for a licence. Where it can be evidenced that such advice had been provided (even if it was incorrect advice) by a competent person, it seems unlikely that any prosecution could follow. It does however seem likely that in some circumstances the liability of the ecologist will come under scrutiny to establish whether the provision of incorrect advice amounts to aiding and abetting or encouraging the offence.

7.4 Identification of offenders

Serious bat crimes are often carried out as part of commercial development and in such cases it is important that the investigation properly identifies those responsible. Dependent upon lines of management and instructions provided, the actual offender can be anybody from a site labourer who physically commits the offence through to the managing director or secretary of a company. The situation can become more complicated if sub-contractors are involved. If companies are to be summonsed for offences it is important that investigators identify and interview those who hold the corporate liability.

7.5 Time limits

Legislation has in recent years been amended to allow for the prosecution of offences relating to bats for as long as two years after commission. However the reality is that after a certain period such matters are considered by the Criminal Justice System to be minor.

Prosecutors in England and Wales take the view that in the majority of cases investigations should be completed within six months of the circumstances of the offence becoming known. Unwarranted delays might lead to cases being discontinued on the basis that prosecution would be an “abuse of process” interfering with the defendants right to a timely trial. There have been a small number of cases where a prosecution has not been pursued because of the abuse of process argument. It is therefore relevant to consider the most common causes of delay that might lead to cases being discontinued.

It is sometimes the case that bat workers will delay reporting incidents of bat crime in the hope that alternative options can be worked out with developers or owners. Whilst the need for such deliberation is understandable, there is a risk that delaying the reporting of a criminal offence might be seen as unnecessary and therefore lead to a consideration of the abuse of process argument. The BCT therefore recommends that incidents are reported to the police as soon as possible after the circumstances become known.

Bat crimes that are not investigated in a timely manner are more likely to be discontinued. Timely in this instance means that the investigation is conducted in a manner where there has been no unreasonable delay. For example, if progress on an investigation is halted whilst the investigating officer is tasked to perform other prolonged duties, this may be considered an unreasonable delay, as would simply not advancing the investigation because of other workload demands. Delays would not be considered unreasonable where they are attributable to the suspects.

Case study 3

On Tuesday 7th January 2014 Keith Seed, aged 56, a property developer from Hartwith, in Nidderdale, North Yorkshire appeared before Harrogate Magistrates Court charged with two offences of destroying two bat roosts. He was fined a total of £3,500 with £85 costs and a £120 victim surcharge.

The offences relate to development work being undertaken on a derelict barn near Harrogate where survey work had revealed the presence of both brown long-eared and common pipistrelle roosts. Mr Seed had been made aware of the survey results but nevertheless the roof of the barn was removed with both roosts being destroyed.

Mr Seed was described in court documents as a ‘very experienced developer’ who ‘should have been aware of restrictions in force but proceeded without proper regard or checking with anyone’.

The last case of bat-crime prosecuted by the CPS in this area resulted in derisory penalties. We believe that this case does much to redress the balance, demonstrating that crime does not pay and that Wildlife Crime will be prosecuted. The BCT assisted both agencies with the provision of a conservation impact statement and other information.

Case study 4

On Monday April 28, Chesterfield magistrates’ court heard a trial, hearing how Hargurdial Singh Rai, 55, of Birmingham-based ISAR Enterprises Ltd, went ahead with the redevelopment of former offices on Dale Road despite a survey, which identified the site as a resting place for brown, long-eared bats.

The court heard how an ecologist originally concluded the site was a roost after an architect acting for ISAR had instructed him. He later noticed development work had started on the site and informed police. A police wildlife crime officer attended and discovered the bat roost had been destroyed.

The Bat Conservation Trust assisted both the police and the prosecution with the provision of an Expert Witness Statement detailing the conservation impacts of the act and outlining the amount (a total of £5,737) Rai had sought to save through the illegal destruction of the roost.

The Magistrates found Rai, of North Drive, Handsworth, Birmingham, and ISAR Enterprises Ltd guilty of destroying the resting place of a protected species between March 2011, and July 2012. In a ground breaking decision the court, instead of imposing a sentence on Mr Rai and Isar Enterprises have referred the case to Derby Crown Court in order that consideration can be given to confiscating assets belonging to the offenders equivalent to the amount saved by not following lawful processes.

Since then the defendants have lodged an appeal against conviction. The case has been listed for hearing and adjourned on a number of occasions; it is currently due to be heard at Nottingham Crown Court in November 2015.

8. Future work

- The BCT will work with the National Wildlife Crime Unit, bat groups and bat workers to ensure that the extent of bat crime can be properly assessed. In order to facilitate this the BCT will look at the role of the organisation as a conduit for the submission of intelligence to NWCU.
- The BCT will argue for an overhaul of conservation legislation that will provide clear guidance as to the legal protection afforded to bats and their roosts, the introduction of measures designed to prevent offences and a more robust licensing system that is linked to professional standards and monitoring.
- The BCT will continue to look for and take up opportunities to provide training on bat crime, in particular to enforcers and prosecutors.
- The BCT will continue to engage with those in the building industry raising the awareness of bat crime and the implications of the legislation protecting bats.
- The BCT will continue to work with enforcers to ensure that where ever possible early action is taken to prevent offences against bats.
- The BCT will continue to monitor the manner in which cases referred to enforcement authorities are investigated with a view to establishing the main factors that prevent the completion of enquiries in a timely manner.
- The BCT will liaise with enforcers to establish the reasons why cases are either not progressed by the CPS, or are not being referred for consideration of prosecution.
- The BCT will consider how the investigations project might attract further support and in particular funding.

The Bat Conservation Trust,
Quadrant House,
250 Kennington Lane,
London, SE11 5RD
Telephone 0345 1300 228
Fax 020 7820 7198
Email enquiries@bats.org.uk
www.bats.org.uk

Registered charity number England and Wales 1012361, Scotland
SC040116. Company limited by guarantee number 2712823.