

# Help us count bats

A guide to taking part in the  
National Bat Monitoring Programme



There are 18 species of bat in the UK (of which 17 are known to be breeding here). Some of our species are very rare; it is thought there is just one greater mouse-eared bat left in the UK. Although all bats have been legally protected since 1981, sadly our bat populations declined dramatically in the last century. These declines were probably caused by a combination of changes in agricultural practices, development and habitat loss.

For this reason, the Bat Conservation Trust has been running the **National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP)** since 1996 with core funding from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) since 2001. The NBMP enables us to track changes in bat populations across a range of habitats with the invaluable assistance of a network of volunteer surveyors. Since the NBMP began, more than 3,500 volunteers have completed surveys at over 6,800 roost and field sites, adding up to more than 52,000 evenings of work.

The data we collect allow us to:

- Assess the conservation needs of the UK's bat species
- Identify any rapid declines
- Select conservation priorities and inform conservation policy
- Ensure that limited resources are directed to where they are most needed

The data that we have already collected have indicated population changes in some species. We need to continue to survey the UK's bats for many more years in order to determine whether these are long-term trends or simply short-term fluctuations.

## How can I take part?

You don't need to be a bat expert to help us monitor the UK's bat populations. We have a wide range of surveys that are suited to all levels of experience and knowledge.

Our surveys are carefully designed so that anybody can take part in monitoring these fascinating but easily overlooked mammals. As well as being of great value to bat conservation, the surveys are fun and rewarding to carry out. Most surveys involve visiting a roost or potential foraging site on two evenings in the summer. If you have bats roosting in your house, for example, you can help us simply by counting them as they leave the roost at dusk – it's as simple as that!

## For beginners

### Sunset–Sunrise Surveys

**Which species do we survey for?**

Any – the purpose of this survey is to find new roosts to monitor.

**What experience do I need?**

None – it's ideal for beginners and those with little survey experience. But you will need a good alarm clock!

**What do I have to do?**

Watch for bats in your garden at sunset, then go out and look for them 'swarming' at roost entrances at sunrise (bat swarming is when several bats circle around a structure or tree). You can select your own 1km route to walk. Alternatively you can identify a suitable structure, such as a building or tree which could house a bat roost.

**When is the survey?** – Anytime in June, July, and August.



### Roost Count

**Which species do we count?**

All, but we calculate population trends for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, Natterer's bat, serotine, and greater and lesser horseshoe bats.

**What experience do I need?**

None – it's ideal for beginners, those with little survey experience and householders who have a roost.

**What do I have to do?**

You need to know of a roost and count the numbers of bats emerging at sunset on two evenings during the summer survey period.

**When is the survey?**

6th to 25th June, except for lesser horseshoe bats (29th May to 17th June) and greater horseshoe bats (7th to 21st July).



Brown long-eared bat (Hugh Clark)



## For intermediate to advanced surveyors

### Waterway Survey

**Which species do we survey for?**

Daubenton's bat.

**What experience do I need?**

You need some previous experience or training in identifying Daubenton's bats with a bat detector.

**What do I have to do?**

Walk along an allocated 1km stretch of river or canal on two evenings during the summer to record Daubenton's bat activity using a bat detector and torch.

**When is the survey?** – 1st to 30th August.

### Field Survey

**Which species do we survey for?**

Noctule, serotine, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle bats.

**What experience do I need?**

Previous field experience or training in identifying these species using a bat detector is essential (see over for details on our bat detector workshops).

**What do I have to do?**

Walk a triangular route in an allocated 1km square on two evenings during the summer.

**When is the survey?** – 1st to 30th July.

### Hibernation Survey

**Which species do we survey for?**

All, but for monitoring purposes we collect data from hibernation site surveys for greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, Daubenton's, Natterer's, whiskered, Brandt's and brown long-eared bats.

**What experience do I need?**

You need to have trained for and hold a Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) hibernation licence or know of a licensed surveyor who can accompany you.

**What do I have to do?**

You need access to any known or potential bat hibernation sites such as caves, mines, cellars or tunnels, and identify and count the bats. Please liaise with your local bat group.

**When is the survey?** – January and February, but we can now

include counts from December - March.

## How do I get involved?

To sign up for the National Bat Monitoring Programme and start taking part in our surveys, simply complete and return the form or sign up online at <http://nbmp.bats.org.uk/Surveys.aspx>. Further information on the NBMP, including training resources, monitoring results from previous years and additional pilot surveys, can be found on our website at [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk).



# Bat Detector Workshops

## Using Your Ears!

To encourage new volunteers and assist more experienced volunteers to refresh their skills, we also run introductory workshops in using bat detectors so that you will be able to take part in our field surveys. You will learn about the basic elements of bat sounds, how to use your hearing to distinguish the various species and how to use bat detectors as tools to help identify bat sounds in the field. They also provide us with the opportunity to ensure there is standardisation for our field surveys.

We also run other training workshops and have created online tutorials to help you get started on surveys. Contact us today for more information or visit our website at [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)

## The future for bats

The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) wants a future where everyone, everywhere can enjoy seeing and hearing bats as a natural part of their environment.

If you would like to know more about bats, you can join BCT and your local bat group. There are nearly 100 bat groups around the UK, just ask us for details of your nearest one!

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT)

**National Bat Helpline: 0345 1300 228** [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)

Quadrant House, 250 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5LD.

[enquiries@bats.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bats.org.uk)

The Bat Conservation Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1012361) and in Scotland (SC040116).

The NBMP is a partnership between Bat Conservation Trust, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Defra and Natural Resources Wales. Additional funding is provided by Natural England.

The Bat Conservation Trust is a member of the **Tracking Mammals Partnership**, a collaborative initiative involving 25 organisations with a variety of interests in UK mammals, which aims to improve the quality, quantity and dissemination of information on the status of mammal species in the UK.

**M**TRACKING  
**Mammals**  
PARTNERSHIP

For more information visit [www.trackingmammals.org](http://www.trackingmammals.org).

This leaflet has been made possible with funding from Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage, Natural Resources Wales and Defra (Environmental Action Fund).

Name

Address

Postcode

Email

Daytime telephone

Other telephone

Are you a member of the Bat Conservation Trust?

 Yes No

Are you a member of your local bat group?

 Yes No

Which one?

How did you hear about the NBMP?

 Bat detector workshop Public event Bat walk Local bat group Roost visit Other (please give details)

## Roost details

Do you have bats in your house?

 Yes No

Do you know which species?

Has a licensed batworker visited the roost to verify the species?

 Yes No

## Licence details

Are you licensed to survey bat hibernation sites?

 Yes No

For information on licences, visit [www.bats.org.uk/pages/licensing.html](http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/licensing.html).

*Please turn over*

## Bat detector details

Do you have access to a bat detector?

Yes

No

Which make and model?

Do you have access to sound analysis software?

Yes

No

Which programme?

Would you be interested in attending a bat detector workshop?

Yes

No

Which type?

Basic (heterodyne)

Sound analysis

Both

## Select your survey

Please indicate which survey(s) you would like to take part in by ticking the appropriate box(es).

Sunset-Sunrise Survey

Roost Count\*:

Field Survey

Waterway Survey

Nathusius' Pipistrelle Survey

(see <http://nbmp.bats.org.uk/Surveys.aspx> for details)

If you are a licensed surveyor and would like to share hibernation data with the NBMP, please tick here

\* Please only choose Roost Count if you know of a roost - your local bat group might be able to help.

Return your completed form to:

**Freepost RSRJ-AXKH-GGRH, NBMP,**

**Bat Conservation Trust,**

**250 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5RD**

(free for your convenience but using a stamp saves us money)

By returning this form you consent to your details being accessible to the Bat Conservation Trust, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and others subject to the approval of BCT and the JNCC for the purposes of bat conservation.