

Training for a licence (Scotland specific)

Why do you want a licence?

Some bat work can be carried out without holding a licence of any kind. Both volunteers and professionals can plan surveys and carry out bat detector activity surveys and emergence counts without requiring a licence. A licence is only needed if there is a possibility of disturbing bats (e.g. by entering a bat roost).

Please note that all bat survey licences require a significant amount of training and field experience; no single course will qualify you for a licence.

Licences in Scotland

In Scotland personal licences are issued by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). There are two licences:

Bat Roost Visitor Licence:

This is the main licence for those undertaking general bat work in Scotland and allows the licence holder to visit or disturb bats and/or their roosts, and to temporarily take and handle bats.

This licence type would be required for:

- Visits to roosts in domestic properties usually for the purpose of assisting owner/occupiers with bat issues e.g. bats getting into their house or just for general advice about bats;
- Visits to bat roosts for surveys such as bat boxes, caves, mines etc.;
- Visits to bat roosts for professional surveys
- Carrying out specialised survey techniques such as trapping.

Individual activities e.g. species to handle and/or disturb, visiting hibernation sites, use of invasive trapping equipment such as harp traps, mist nets and acoustic lures, can be applied for, making each licence individual to the holder. This is very different to the English system in which different standard licences are required for different activities.

Training and sign off for a licence is via a licensed trainer (normally within the local bat group) or by two references (from individuals who already hold a licence for the activities you wish to undertake).

Science and Research Licence:

This licence is for science, research or educational purposes and is for individuals planning to carry out any experiment or research that might otherwise result in offences being committed in relation to bats or their roosts. This licence is for a specific project so requires details about the species involved, geographical location, methodology to be used and a description of the work. These licences are issued for a set time period in which the work will take place. The use of ringing, marking and tagging techniques requires this type of licence.

Sign off for this licence is via two references (from individuals who already hold a licence for the activities you wish to undertake).

Training

If you are looking to gain a licence to take part in bat group activities then you may be able to get some or all of your training via the local bat group. Most bat groups have one or more licensed trainers, who take on a certain number of trainees each year. The trainees must cover all of the relevant theory relating to bat work, and then do a number of accompanied roost visits or surveys to gain practical experience. The training follows the [Bat Workers Manual](#).

If your plan is to become an ecological bat consultant then you will need some formal training. For this there are three options:

1. Find a licence trainer who is willing to provide training for professional survey work. As above these trainers are normally linked to a bat group.
2. Find other licensed bat consultants who may be willing to take you along on some of their contract work.
3. Pay to attend a licensing course - a few trainers run their own licensing training courses.

Some of the training for a licence can be gained by attending training courses, particularly the theory side such as bat biology and ecology and legislation, and some experience of survey skills.

BCT (and other providers) offer a number of training courses which provide a good foundation for those wishing to undertake professional bat survey work. Some of these courses may also be suitable for other individuals wishing to train for this licence type. However, following on from these courses, an individual would still need to get a substantial amount of experience in the field. A log

book should be kept of all courses, reading, bat group activities and other bat experience as this will all help an individual in working towards a licence.

It can be difficult to gain the necessary experience (outside of bat groups) for this licence. BCT is currently working to try and help those finding it difficult to gain a licence, particularly those who wish to undertake professional bat survey work. We have published a [professional training standards document](#) that provides information about the skills and knowledge an individual would need to become an ecological consultant. We would also like to provide information on where individuals can go to gain experience and how they can ultimately get a licence.

For more information: <http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/species-licensing/mammal-licensing/bats-and-licensing/research/>