

Bats and the Law



There are 18 species of bat in the UK, 9 of these in Scotland. One species is virtually extinct and two are classed as endangered. Others are considered to be threatened.

All species of British bats and their roosts are protected by UK/Scottish/Northern Ireland and European Legislation. In some cases their foraging sites may also be safeguarded by a designation such as Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

As a brief summary, it is an offence to -

Intentionally (intentionally or recklessly in Scotland) kill, injure or take a bat

- * Possess or control a live or dead bat, any part or anything derived from a bat
- * Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure that a bat uses for shelter or protection
- * Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- * Set and use articles capable of catching, or killing a bat
- * Sell, offer or expose for sale, or possess or transport for the purpose of sale, any live or dead bat, or anything derived from a bat
- * Make a false statement to obtain a licence for bat work.



Useful Contacts



The Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation in Scotland is Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). SNH can give advice on problems involving bats or any other species and conservation issues.
Telephone (Dumfries Office, Southern Scotland)
0300 067 3200
Website: www.nature.scot

The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) is a national organisation dedicated to conserving bats for both us and future generations to enjoy. BCT runs a National Bat Monitoring Programme which anyone can help with.

The BCT National Bat Helpline (24 hour) is for anyone who has a problem or query about bats.
Website: www.bats.org.uk
Helpline: 0345 1300 228.

If you suspect that a crime against bats has been committed, contact the Police by calling 101



Dumfries and Galloway Bat Group:

Secretary Freda Seddon
Telephone 01387 811580
www.dumfriesbatgroup.org.uk
facebook.com/dandgbatgroup/

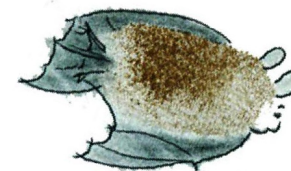
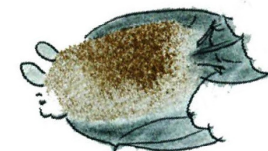
We hold informal meetings in the winter and undertake surveys in the summer.

If you would like to learn more about bats and join us in our activities, do come along and meet us—contact the secretary for details or visit our website.

Leaflet produced for D+G Bat Group by Freda Seddon. Thanks to the Bat Conservation Trust for providing the photos by R. Stebbings, JJ Kaczanow and Hugh Clark, and to Bat Group Members for the other photos in this leaflet.

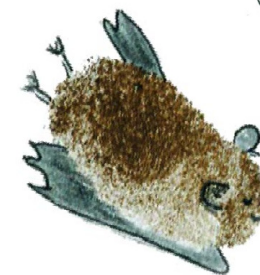
Dumfries and Galloway Bat Group

Batty about Bats ??



Myself, I rather like the bat,
It's not a mouse, it's not a rat.
It has no feathers, yet has wings,
It's quite inaudible when it sings.
It zig-zags through the evening air
And never gets in ladies' hair -
A fact that men may spend their lives
Attempting to convince their wives!

Ogden Nash



Bat Bits

Bats are probably the most mysterious and fascinating mammals in Britain.

Being small, active at night, living in crevices and other secret places and spending most of their lives hibernating or 'asleep', bats are very difficult to study.



Brown Long-eared Bat.
Photo by R. Stebbings,

However, their reputation for being scary or weird is undeserved, and as people learn more about them and understand them they find just how well evolved and interesting bats are.

All British bats are insectivorous, and it is the lack of flying insects in the winter that forces them to hibernate from November to March.

Females congregate in maternity roosts in early summer and produce one baby each year, which they suckle for about 6 weeks. Baby bats start to eat insects, brought to the roost by their mother, from about 3 weeks of age.



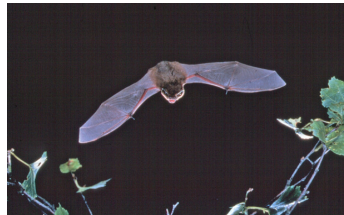
Pipistrelles in roost
Photo by
J J Kaczanow

Bats return to their traditional roosts year after year, but may use different roosts at different times of the year.

Bat Workers

The present bat group was established in 2005 and is a Partner Group with the Bat Conservation Trust, the only charity devoted to conserving UK bats.

Several members now have their Conservation Licence ('Roost Visitors Licence') which means that they are able to monitor bat boxes and other roosts, visit roost in houses to offer advice, and handle bats.



Flying Pipistrelle
Photo by Hugh Clark,

Other members are receiving training.

Training for a Conservation Licence includes learning about bat legislation, ecology and biology, public relations, handling bats and surveying and monitoring.

As most bat work is carried out in the evening or at dawn, bat workers have to be prepared to be out and about at 'unsocial' hours!

You don't have to be a trained bat worker to be a useful member of a Bat Group, but only licensed workers can visit bat roosts and handle bats.



Trainees learn how to handle bats safely.

Sometimes you need a closer look at a bat



Bat Work

Members of the bat group work together or individually to further the welfare and understanding of bats in Dumfries and Galloway.



Checking bat boxes.

The group puts up bat boxes in woodlands, an important job because in modern woodlands old trees, which have the sort of holes and crevices that bats like to live in, tend to be cut down, sometimes destroying a bat roost, or even killing bats in the process.

Bat boxes are monitored as often as possible, to see if they are being used by bats and if so, by which species.

Members undertake surveys on behalf of the Bat Conservation Trust or other organisations, in order to monitor the population status of various species of bats.

If householders have problems with bats, the group may be able to give advice or practical help such as removing accumulations of bat droppings from a loft if the owner cannot do it themselves.

Where people are unhappy about having a bat roost, we may be able to reassure them and promote understanding and, hopefully, tolerance.

Bat Walks and Talks

Bat work is also about education and promoting Bats. The bat group is available to attend events and give talks and bat walks to any interested schools and other organisations.



Volunteers helping to make bat boxes.