

## BATS SPECIES ACTION PLAN

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The UKBAP identifies five British bats as UK priorities (with UK SAPs) and a further nine as Species of Conservation Concern<sup>39</sup>. The species included in this action plan are listed below including three UK priorities (\*) and the rest are species of conservation concern:

- **Brown Long Eared Bat** *Plecotus auritus*
- **Daubentons Bat** *Myotis daubentonii*
- **Greater Horseshoe Bat\*** *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum\**
- **Lesser Horseshoe Bat\*** *Rhinolophus hipposideros\**
- **Natterer’s Bat** *Myotis nattereri*
- **Noctule** *Nyctalus noctula*
- **Pipistrelle Bat\*** *Pipistrellus pipistrellus\**
- **Whiskered/Brandts Bat** *Myotis mystacinus/Myotis brandtii*

Relevant Legislation/Species Status								
	brown long eared	daubentons	greater horseshoe	lesser horseshoe	natterers	noctule	pipistrelle	whiskered
priority (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	S	S	P	P	S	S	P	S
EC Habitats and Species Directive	IVa	IVa	IIa, IVa	IIa, IVa	IVa	IVa	IVa	IVa
Conservation Regs 1994	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Berne 1982	II	II	II	II	II	II	III	II
Bonn 1979	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	II
CITES 1975	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WCA 1981	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6

### 2. CURRENT STATUS

#### 2.1 UK and Wales

All British bats are insectivorous and feed in habitats such as woodland, scrub, along hedgerows, wetlands, watercourses/water bodies and species-rich grasslands. All bats need warm breeding sites in summer and cold, safe hibernation sites in winter. Each species travels between summer and winter roosts every year. Relatively little is known about the current status of bats, although it is widely acknowledged that all bat species are declining nationally.

#### 2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

With its diverse landscape and its history of past mining activities, Caerphilly county borough provides suitable habitats for most bat species. Of the fourteen species of bat in Britain, eight species have been recorded in the county borough.

##### 2.2.1 Brown long-eared bat

This medium sized bat is the second most common species and is widespread through the whole of Britain. It mainly feeds on moths, beetles, flies, bugs, earwigs and spiders and, remarkably will sometimes land on the ground to catch or handle prey. This bat also flies close to the

ground, making them vulnerable to attack by predators, such as the domestic cat. It is probably the most commonly seen species in attics of houses with medium to large open spaces. Summer roosts are found in older buildings, barns, churches and trees. Caves, tunnels, mines, icehouses and probably trees provide their winter roosts. This bat is reliant on open woodland, parkland and orchards. Although little data currently exists, brown long-eared bats are known to be breeding in the county borough and are probably quite common, but a survey is needed to confirm this.

#### **2.2.2 Daubenton's bat**

Daubenton's bat is a medium sized bat, often associated with water habitats. In Britain it is a fairly widespread bat, feeding on insects from and close to the waters' surface. Food sources include small flies, caddisflies and mayflies. Summer roosts are commonly found in trees, but also in tunnels, under bridges, caves and mines. Winter roosts are in caves, mines and other underground sites. It has been recorded in Caerphilly county borough, although a more detailed survey will be needed to determine breeding sites, hibernation sites and population status.

#### **2.2.3 Greater horseshoe bat**

This very rare bat is heavily reliant on species rich grassland, woodland and hedgerows. It feeds on large insects including chafers, dung-beetles moths and crane flies. Greater Horseshoe bats are traditionally cave dwellers but many now use large houses and churches. There are currently 35 recognised maternity and all year roosts and 369 hibernation sites in the UK. Caerphilly has no confirmed maternity or hibernation roosts but there is a male roost in the county borough.

#### **2.2.4 Lesser horseshoe Bat**

This is a rare bat that feeds on insects in the woodland canopy, with a heavy reliance on hedgerows. It is traditionally a cave dweller but is now more reliant on man-made roosts such as attics in houses and churches however, it will also utilise smaller spaces than the greater horseshoe bat. Lesser horseshoes feed on smaller flying insects such as craneflies, flies and small moths. There is one known site for lesser horseshoe bats in Caerphilly county borough, although it is not known if they are breeding. This species is widespread but uncommon in Wales and South- West England.

#### **2.2.5 Natterers bat**

This medium sized bat is generally scarce, although widespread. Habitats include open woodland, parkland, hedgerows and along waterside vegetation feeding on flies, moths, spiders and other small insects. Summer roosts are often found in old stone buildings with large wooded beams such as castles, manor houses and churches, or older large timbered barns. They are traditionally tree roosting species and will occasionally use bat boxes. The preferred winter roosts of natterers are the cool entrances of mines and caves but they will hibernate in many underground shelters. They usually hibernate singularly or in small groups, which may include other species. Again, little is known about this bat, except that its presence has been recorded in the county borough, therefore more survey work is required.

#### **2.2.6 Noctule bat**

The noctule is one of the largest British bats and has a scattered distribution. It is not common and is dependant on woodland, parkland, pasture, water and forest edges where it feeds primarily on moths, dung and chafer beetles, mayflies and winged ants. Most food is caught on the wing. They are opportunist feeders and can be seen feeding on moths around street lamps in urban areas. They very seldom roost in buildings, preferring instead rot holes and woodpecker holes in trees. When found in buildings, they roost behind tiles, large soffits; and occasionally in

tall disused industrial chimneys and cavities in bridges. Hibernation occurs mainly in trees or rock fissures and hollows, but also in bat boxes and buildings. Noctules are declining throughout Britain. They have been confirmed as present and breeding in Caerphilly county borough, in association with diverse habitats of large open countryside such as ancient woodlands, post-industrial sites and suburban areas.

#### 2.2.7 Pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus* spp.)

The pipistrelle is Britain's most common and smallest bat. Often associated with human habitation. It feeds on small flying insects such as midges, caddis flies, mosquitoes, mayflies, lacewings and small moths. Habitat requirements are water, marshy areas, in open woodland and at woodland edge, farmland, hedgerows and urban areas. Pipistrelles are crevice dwellers mainly and prefer to roost in confined spaces in buildings such as behind hanging tiles, weatherboards and soffits and in cavity walls, rarely roosting in attic spaces. They will sometimes fly during the day to catch insects. Winter roosts are often isolated individuals or small groups in crevices in buildings and trees. In Caerphilly county borough, as in the rest of the UK, the pipistrelle is probably widespread and numerous, although it has undergone significant declines in the last 25 years. Pipistrelle bats have recently been divided into two separate species, the common pipistrelle (*P. pipistrellus*) and the soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*). The two species are widely distributed throughout Caerphilly county borough but the exact distribution is not yet known.

#### 2.2.8 Whiskered/Brandts bat

These two species were only separated as distinct species in 1970. They are extremely difficult to differentiate and have a superficial resemblance to pipistrelles. They are probably under-recorded for this reason. They rely on wooded country, often near water and feed on moths and other small insects and spiders. Summer roosting sites are mainly buildings and tree and winter hibernation sites are largely unknown, although small numbers have been recorded in caves and tunnels. Whiskered and brandts bats are found throughout England and Wales. One whiskered bat has been found in Caerphilly county borough, although no breeding or hibernation roosts have yet been confirmed.

### 2.3 Links with Habitats

- *Wetlands* (water courses and water bodies)
- ***Deciduous Woodland***
- Forestry action plans
- ***Wildlife Corridors*** (hedgerows)
- *Species-rich Grasslands*
- *Common Land*
- *Post-Industrial Land*
- *Urban Habitats*
- Orchards, parklands, and scrub

### 3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

Threats to these species are poorly understood, but low population density, low reproduction rates and an aversion by the public to sharing their properties with bats, make them particularly vulnerable.

- Loss and fragmentation of habitats. Hedgerow removal was probably a significant factor in the decline of most bat species, although this trend is being slowed by the introduction of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.
- Loss of and damage to roosting sites:
  - Loss of summer, and occasionally winter roosts in buildings through disturbance and/or non-tolerance by human residents.
  - Loss or disturbance of winter hibernation sites, in buildings, caves, disused mine shafts and tunnels, houses, pill boxes and cellars through disturbing recreational activity and maintenance/inspection of structures.
  - Loss of summer and winter roost sites in trees because of the degradation of woodland structure and through the felling of veteran trees in woodland and parkland.
- Reduction in insect prey because of intensive farming methods, overgrazing and the use of pesticides.
- Use of toxic chemicals in timber treatment and in new timbers.
- Significant increase in the numbers of domestic cats causing increased predation.

#### **4. CURRENT ACTION**

- 4.1 Current legislation exists to protect bats and bat roosts.
- 4.2 CCW, CCBC, bat groups and the wildlife trusts are working together to raise the profile of bats.
- 4.3 Use of agri-environment schemes such as Tir Gofal and organic food production to reduce stocking densities and pesticide use.
- 4.4 Enhancement of habitat by the addition of bat boxes.
- 4.5 Public awareness raising through bat walks and talks arranged by Caerphilly county borough council in country parks.
- 4.6 Monitoring of selected breeding sites.
- 4.7 Education of demolition companies, industries, timber treatment companies, home insulation companies, tree surgeons, and cavers and pot-holers.

#### **5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS**

##### **5.1 UK Objectives and Targets**

- 5.1.1 Maintain the current range and population.
- 5.1.2 In the long term, expand the current range through natural re-colonisation and landscape enhancement into areas where research shows that climate and landscape features are suitable.

## 5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

- 5.2.1 Establish the baseline status and distribution of all species of bat occurring in Caerphilly county borough. (Target: 2005)
- 5.2.2 Halt the decline in the breeding population in Caerphilly county borough. (Target: 2005)
- 5.2.3 Enhance roosting sites (including hibernation sites) and important feeding habitats, where necessary, particularly around maternity roosts with the aim of increasing population levels within the county borough. (Target: ongoing)
- 5.2.4 Enhance breeding success through protection of roost sites. (Target: ongoing)

## 6. ACTION AND KEY PARTNERS

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>6.1 Policy and Legislation</b>											
6.1.1 Ensure consideration of maternity and hibernation roost sites and the surrounding habitat when developing structure plans and assessing planning applications. Provide alternative roost sites to mitigate any loss, and survey on planning applications for old buildings.	CCBC	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.2 Ensure routine survey of mines or other underground sites due for closure or change of use, or otherwise considered vulnerable, with a view to protecting any bat colonies identified.	CCW	GBG GLBG CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.3 Ensure that all Policies and Strategies do not adversely affect bats and their roosts. Develop a strategy for the consideration of bats within CCBC work, such as tree management and design of bridges.	CCBC	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.4 Work with the EA to ensure that bats are included in LEAPs.	CCW	EA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.5 Seek to designate important roosts and feeding areas as SSSI/SINC/LNR.	CCW	CCBC			✓					✓	✓
<b>6.2 Site Safeguard and Management</b>											
6.2.1 Ensure important roost sites are protected through liaison with owners.	CCW	GBG GLBG CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.2 Encourage the use of low toxicity timber treatments in all buildings and encourage 'bat-friendly' design features in new buildings and other structures, and in the renovation of existing structures.	CCW	Coed Cymru FC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.3 Raise awareness among those managing trees and woodlands about bats and encourage appropriate management, particularly of land adjacent to important roosts.	CCBC	Coed Cymru FC CCW	✓			✓				✓	

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:									
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
<b>6.2 Site Safeguard and Management (continued)</b>												
6.2.4 Enhance existing underground sites to make them more suitable for hibernating bats. Where appropriate promote the construction of purpose built hibernacula and the 'grilling' of cave and disused tunnel entrances to protect important hibernation sites.	CCW	CCBC GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
6.2.5 Develop a good code of practice in relation to the conservation and management of trees that are of value to bats.	CCBC	CCW	✓									
6.2.6 Enhance bat habitat, where appropriate by the addition of bat boxes to trees and buildings and promote the restoration or re-creation of insect rich habitats.	CCW	GBG GLBG CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.7 Consider the use of management agreements to improve important habitats or roosts.	CCBC	CCW	✓									
<b>6.3 Species Management and Protection</b>												
6.3.1 Continue to protect known breeding roosts and hibernacula from development, destruction and disturbance through maintaining and improving current training procedures for those who may come into contact with bats.	CCW	CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.2 Establish a bat group in Caerphilly county borough.	CBP	GBG GLBG		✓								
6.3.3 Install artificial roosts such as bat boxes and bat bricks and monitor these in important sites.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.4 Encourage members of the public, local businesses, consultancies and other wildlife/environmental groups to report bat sightings. Coordinate the collation of records obtained by the above to produce a database of information.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.5 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>6.4 Advisory</b>												
6.4.1 Increase tolerance of the bat by raising awareness of the conservation importance of bats to landowners and householders.	CBP	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4.2 Continue to support and contribute to the current network that provides bat conservation advice.	GBG GLBG	CCW CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4.3 Advise householders on the use of less harmful pesticides for timber treatment, choice of timber and the timing of the works.	Coed Cymru	FC CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>6.4 Advisory (continued)</b>											
6.4.4 Advise on the location of important maternity roosts and hibernacula (where appropriate) and stress the importance of habitat management for the surrounding areas, to encourage provision for the species in old buildings and on best tree management practices in the vicinity of important bat sites, particularly to: project officers for WGS and Tir Gofal; organisations associated with the care and restoration of old buildings; organisations engaged in underground activities (research and recreation); Environment Agency (along water courses); tree surgeons, tree wardens and foresters; key landowners and house-holders, vesters; and other relevant organisations.	CCW	CCBC CADW SCW GWT GLWT GBG GLBG FC EA Coed Cymru	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>6.5 Future Research and Monitoring</b>											
6.5.1 Survey to estimate the relative numbers in differing habitats and roost types, particularly churches, mine-shafts, caves and ice-houses. Continue to search for maternity roosts and hibernation sites, mating roosts, underground sites and satellite or minor summer sites to provide estimates of local population size and to determine the extent of species decline. Undertake a survey of maternity roosts to determine distribution of the two pipistrelle bat phenotypes (this may be part of a national scheme). Assess the importance of each site with a view to establishing protection for key sites.	CCW	GBG GLBG	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5.2 Undertake research to identify the habitat requirements, ecology and appropriate management of feeding areas to maintain bat populations. The findings should be used to develop guidelines and policies for habitat protection, creation and management around roost sites.	CCW	GBG GLBG		✓							
6.5.3 Develop and maintain a database for bat records and support setting up a Local Record Centre.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5.4 Participate in national monitoring schemes, but carry out additional monitoring as necessary to establish a baseline survey of summer roosts. Survey and monitor known and potential underground sites.	GBG / GLBG	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:									
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
<b>6.6 Communications and Publicity</b>												
6.6.1 Raise awareness of the conservation importance of large old houses, farm buildings, churches and old trees as roost and hibernation sites amongst the general public, land managers and businesses.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
6.6.2 Operate a programme of educational activities and events, and publicity for locally important species, working towards changing the public's perception of bats.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
6.6.3 Promote the legal status and conservation importance of bats to landowners, builders, CCBC staff and others whose actions may affect bats.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓