

## Minimum Standards for Bat Surveys in West Yorkshire (Version 5)

Bats are legally protected under the EC Habitats Directive and in UK legislation by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). Subject to some specific exceptions this makes it a criminal offence to intentionally or recklessly capture or kill, disturb in a place of shelter or destroy the resting place of any bat. **A roost site is protected even when bats are not present.** Bat surveys need to be undertaken before a planning application can be determined (ODPM Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System).

All surveys are to be conducted in accordance with the relevant section of the JNCC Bat Workers Manual 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2004). For larger or more complex sites it is recommended that the scope of the survey be discussed with the local authority ecologist prior to starting. The most up to date good practice guidance should be followed as a basic minimum (refer to [Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines, Bat Conservation Trust, 2nd Edition.\(2012\)](#) and [Bat Mitigation Guidelines, English Nature \(2004\)](#)) and this should include:

- The use of an appropriately qualified and experienced licensed bat surveyor and assistants as needed to carry out such work.
- A desk top study to establish existing records (including a search with West Yorkshire Ecology and the West Yorkshire Bat Group).
- A walkover of the survey site to assess the presence of features important to bats, in particular feeding, roosting, swarming and hibernating opportunities.
- A detailed internal and external inspection of buildings and structures to search for indications of bat activity, and identify any limitations of such a survey.
- Trees with cracks, crevices, hollow trunks or broken limbs which are to be affected by the proposed development either directly, by lopping or felling, or indirectly, such as by lighting, should be surveyed for evidence of bat roosts.
- A dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey will normally be expected to identify roost sites which cannot be located by a visual inspection of the building or structure. More than one may often be required. These should be undertaken at suitable, times of the year (normally May to August, (September to mid-October is sub-optimal but may be acceptable); times of day (around dusk and/or dawn); and weather conditions (not heavy rain, strong wind or cold). It is important that sufficient surveyors are present to cover the site.
- Use of heterodyne detectors alone, is no longer normally acceptable. If surveys are undertaken without frequency division or time expansion detectors a justification must be given.
- Where dawn/dusk surveying is not appropriate due to the time of year, the bat surveyor will be expected to provide a detailed, reasoned statement (including photographs) on:
  - the opportunities available within the structure for bats and
  - whether or not emergence or re-entry surveys are considered necessary.
- Where survey limitations leave inconclusive results precautionary mitigation may be acceptable with the approval of the local authority ecologist. This should adopt the format used for protected species licence applications see <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/licences/applicationforms.aspx#bat>, with less detail where it is not available to reflect the situation.

This should cover the timing of the work, designs and location plans for permanent bat roosting / hibernation features, and be aimed at the type of bats which might be expected to use the features on the proposal site. This option is unlikely to be acceptable for larger proposals or known bat roosts.

- Where a proposal has a bat roost which will require a protected species licence, a Method Statement to the Natural England format, should accompany the application. This includes an assessment of how the proposal with mitigation will meet the “three tests” set out in Regulation 53 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2010.

The bat survey report should include:

- an outline of the proposed development;
- details of the surveyors’ experience and licence number;
- site location (including grid reference);
- survey objectives and methodology, including the equipment used;
- results of desk top survey, building searches, emergence/re-entry surveys (or alternative reasoned statement where applicable) and the species recorded, including details of the output from remote recording devices;
- date, time and weather conditions;
- a plan of the site with areas searched, bat habitat features, the location and direction of static detectors and cameras, the route taken/position and timing of surveyors with manual detectors and roost/activity areas;
- any limitations of the survey;
- photographs to help assess the adequacy of the report;
- any mitigation proposals and any requirement for European Protected Species Licences including Natural England “Method Statement” (and assessment against the “three tests”);
- a conclusion stating the potential impacts on bats.

Electronic copies of reports should be supplied to the local authority planning department and directly to West Yorkshire Ecology to add to the Ecological Record. There is an expectation that the ecologist will note any other significant species using the site.

See also “Bat Surveys out of season flow diagram” for small applications outside of the active season for bats, between October and April ([www.ecology.wyjs.org.uk](http://www.ecology.wyjs.org.uk)).

Revised 18 July 2012.