

Bat Surveys NIEA Specific Requirements

All species of bats (*Vespertilionidae*) are strictly protected under The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) (known as the Habitats Regulations). They are known as a European protected species. Under the Habitats Regulations it is an offence:

- deliberately to capture, injure or kill a wild animal of a European protected species;
- deliberately to disturb such an animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection;
- deliberately to disturb such an animal in such a way as to be likely to:
 - affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which it belongs;
 - Impair its ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or care for its young; or
 - Impair its ability to hibernate or migrate;
- deliberately to obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place of such an animal; or
- to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal

On assessing your planning application NIEA considers that there is reasonable likelihood of bats being present on the site and affected by the proposed development. To ensure your development proposal complies with the Habitats Regulations and planning policy, NIEA has recommended to the Planning Authority that an appropriate bat survey should be carried out prior to the determination of your application.

NIEA reserve the right to determine whether the survey is adequate or when additional information is required.

In order to ensure an adequate assessment the following specifications should be followed:

- All survey work must be carried out according to the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines*, Third Edition (2016). Different types of bat surveys are required depending on the conditions on the application site and the type of proposal. NIEA will specify the type of survey required in our correspondence with the Planning Authority. Details of specific types of surveys and the required methodologies can be found at the following locations within the BCT Guidelines:
 - Bat Roost Potential Surveys – Chapters 5 and 6
 - Bat Activity Surveys - Chapter 8
 - Bat Roost Emergence/ Re-entry Surveys – Chapter 7
 - Bat Hibernacular Surveys – Chapter 5
 - Bat Surveys for Wind Turbine Proposals – Chapter 10 of the BCT, *Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, Second Edition* (2012)
- NIEA, Natural Heritage recommends that all works comply with British Standard 42020:2013, *Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development*. This provides recommendations and guidance for those engaged in planning and development, whose work might affect or have implications for conservation, or the enhancement of biodiversity.
- The applicant must ensure that the commissioned surveyor(s) has the necessary experience and qualifications to carry out this work. The qualifications and experience of all surveyors must be included in the survey report. NIEA recommends that the surveyor(s) is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

- The survey information must be presented in a written report and must include appropriately scaled maps showing areas surveyed. All evidence of bats found must be included. NIEA recommends that the reporting template detailed in Chapter 11 of the BCT, *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines*, Third Edition (2016) is used for all reports.
- Survey equipment must be sufficient to identify all species of bat. All surveys must be recorded for later analysis. Details of appropriate survey equipment are provided in Appendix 1 of the BCT, *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines*, Third Edition (2016).
- The survey report must clearly identify all limitations and any areas which were unable to be inspected or surveyed.
- If necessary, the report should recommend ways in which bats can be protected from the proposed development and suggest appropriate mitigation measures. Mitigation measures should cover all phases of the development - before, during and after construction.
- Surveys should be submitted to the Planning Authority within one year of being carried out.
- In the event that the planning application goes to appeal or public inquiry, the person(s) contracted to carry out survey work may be required to appear at, or give evidence to, the inquiry. Recordings of surveys undertaken must be retained as they may be required by NIEA as evidence.
- All located roosts should be reported to the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR)*
- A protected species licence must be obtained from the NIEA Wildlife Team prior to the commencement of the following bat survey methods:
 - Entering a bat roost
 - Disturbing a bat roost / endoscope use
 - Catching or handling bats
- For more guidance and information please refer to the following publications and websites:

NIEA Development Management website

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/development-management>

NIEA Development Management publication – Bats and Development

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/bats-development>

NI Bat group

<http://www.bats-ni.org.uk/>

Bat Conservation Trust website and Best Practice Guidelines

<http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/batsurveyguide.html>

Wildlife Management and Licensing web page

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/biodiversity/wildlife-licensing-and-management>

*** Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR)**

<http://www.nmni.com/cedar>

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

www.cieem.net