

## Bat surveys – NIEA Specific Requirements

Bats are afforded a high level of strict protection under The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 as amended. On assessing your application NIEA consider that there is reasonable likelihood of bats being present on the proposed site. In order to meet national and international statutory obligations, NIEA has recommended to Planning Service that appropriate bat surveys should be carried out prior to the consideration of your planning application. The surveys should be carried out by a professional ecological consultant with relevant experience and qualifications in bat survey techniques. Once we have received the survey information we will be in a position to comment further on your proposal.

Please note that the following specifications are the **minimum** requirement. The applicant should be aware that due to the seasonal and highly mobile nature of bats, further survey work may be required where timing constraints and/or poor weather conditions occur.

- All survey work and survey reports must be carried out according to the \*Bat Conservation Trust 'Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines' document. We recommend that the Bat Conservation Trust reporting template is used for all submissions to the department.
- The applicant must ensure that the commissioned bat surveyor(s) has the necessary experience and qualifications to carry out this work. It is preferable that the surveyor(s) is a member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM).
- The date and time of the survey and the qualifications and experience of all surveyors must be included in the survey report.
- There must be at least 2/3 surveys carried out between May and September. Survey work must be spaced evenly throughout this period.
- Number of surveyors and size of survey area must be specified. If the site is large, more than one surveyor may be required to cover the whole site. Survey methodology must be dependent on the area of the site and habitat features present, therefore more than 3 surveys may be required.
- The survey report must include a large scale map showing the location/ transect walked by each surveyor. The location of any other recording equipment must also be illustrated.
- At least one of the survey visits must include a dusk (emergence) and a dawn (re-entry) survey within one 24 hour period.
- The surveyor must ensure that equipment used is sufficient to identify all species of bat
- Surveys must be carried out within one year of submission to the department.

- The information should be presented in a written report and must include a large scale (A4 size) map. The exact location of roosts, roost entrances, advertising posts, swarming activity foraging and commuting movements must be shown. All evidence of use by Bats found, for example droppings, must be included.
- If necessary, the survey must recommend the most appropriate ways in which the Bats can be protected from the impacts of development throughout the duration of the development.
- 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.
- All located roosts should be reported to the Northern Ireland Bat Group\*
- Please note that a license is required for the following bat survey methods;
  - Entering a bat roost
  - Disturbing a bat roost
  - Catching or handling bats
  - Use of an endoscope
- For more guidance and information on survey methodology and bat ecology please refer to the following publications and websites;

**NIEA Development Management website;**

[http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/land-home/plan/advice\\_and\\_information.htm](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/land-home/plan/advice_and_information.htm)

**NIEA Development Management publication – Bats and Development**

[http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/bats\\_development\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/bats_development_booklet.pdf)

**\*NI Bat group**

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

**Bat Conservation Trust website and Best Practice Guidelines**

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

\*<http://www.bats.org.uk/publications.php?keyword=Bat+surveys&month=&year=&category=&search=Search>

**NIEA Development Management Advice and Information web page**

[http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/land-home/plan/advice\\_and\\_information.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/land-home/plan/advice_and_information.htm)

**Wildlife Management and Licensing web page;**

[http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/wildlife\\_management\\_and\\_licensing.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/wildlife_management_and_licensing.htm)

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