



# Bat Survey Requirements

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## Minimum Standards in North Yorkshire Version 1

North Yorkshire Bat Group

12/11/2013

# **Minimum Standards for Bat Surveys in North Yorkshire (A Working Document)**

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**Written by:-** Robert Masheder, Andrew Westgarth, John Drewett, Giles Manners *et al* including the North Yorkshire Bat Group (NYBG), Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT), West Yorkshire Bat Group (WYBG) with inputs from cross County Local Authority Ecologist's.

## **Introduction**

This document was launched on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at a Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) presentation. It is written in order to provide minimum standards for bat survey within North Yorkshire for all biodiversity stakeholders such as planners, developers, consultants and conservation workers in both the voluntary and private sector.

This document is provided in addition to National Guidance in order to apply local species knowledge and form a basis for the geographic context of bat survey within North Yorkshire, as different bat species occur within different roost types in different Counties.

This document provides a basic quality standard against which reports can be measured and all stakeholders including LPAs will be invited to ratify the contents herein.

Bats are legally protected under the EC Habitats Directive and in UK legislation by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) 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). Legislative updates will be included to this working document as they are introduced. Annual revision / legislative sign off will be overseen by NYBG in consultation with all stakeholders including the LPA.

### **Principle of change**

This document is a 'Working Document' and is designed to be used by applied ecologists to provide a robust survey and data base on which to 'Integrate Wildlife (Bats) into Development' in line with local and regional BAP principles. It is important that this document is able to respond to change and it is an underlying principle that amendments are made 'by mutual agreement' of the NYBG committee at any time. In order for LPAs to sign up to this document, a dated version is to be produced and revisions are to be agreed and signed off as detailed in the paragraph above.

## Sources of information & standard survey effort

All surveys are to be conducted in accordance with published guidance (see below). 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 should include:

- The use of an appropriately qualified and experienced licensed bat surveyor and assistant/s as needed to carry out such work. The surveyors' names and qualifications must be clearly stated in the 'Introduction' section of the report. The names of surveyors should extend to individuals working under supervision of a 'Licensed ecologist' such as emergence observations by trained staff using heterodyne detectors.
- A desk top study to establish existing records (including a search with the North Yorkshire Bat Group as they hold the most comprehensive and up to date information within North Yorkshire).
- 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 inclusive. September to mid-October is sub-optimal but may be acceptable if unusual seasonal variation has occurred. Date must be specified.
- Times of day: Dusk - 15 minutes before sunset to 2hrs after sunset. Dawn - 1.5hrs to 2hrs before sunrise until sunrise. Optimal weather conditions: not heavy rain, strong wind or cold. It is important that sufficient surveyors are present to cover the site (take field of view and individual surveyor ability into account).
- Heterodyne detectors may need to be supplemented with frequency division and/or time expansion detectors in order to digitally record bat species which are harder to detect or identify in the field, particularly when the recording ecologist is not experienced in *Chiroptera* field behaviour.

- 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. Where the LPA does not employ an ecologist, the LPA may need to seek professional ecological advice (such as Consultancy firms, YWT, or other ecologists from other LPAs).

This advisory and precautionary approach should adopt the format used for protected species licence applications, see ref. below:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/licences/applicationforms.aspx>,

This approach may contain 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 in 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.
- Natural England standing advice for bats at [http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/Bats\\_tcm6-21717.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/Bats_tcm6-21717.pdf)

## **Report format and contents**

The bat survey report should include:

- Contents list and pagination;
- An outline of the proposed development;
- Details of the surveyors' experience and class licence category;
- Site location (including National 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, temperature and weather conditions including humidity and Bf wind speed;
- 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');
- Conclusion stating the potential impacts on bats.

## **Sharing data & results**

Electronic copies of reports should be supplied to the local authority planning department and directly to the North Yorkshire Bat Group to add to the Ecological Record Data. There is an expectation that the ecologist will note any other significant or protected species observed on 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.

Revised 12<sup>th</sup> November 2013.