

Help, I've Got Bats!



Herefordshire
Wildlife Trust

If you find an injured bat or have a bat-specific query, contact the Bat Conservation Trust National Bat Helpline: **0345 1300 228**. They can provide more specialised assistance and will link the member of the public with the network of local bat ambulance drivers who will transport the bat to the nearest registered bat carer.

Will bats damage my house?

It is almost unknown for bats to cause damage to houses. Unlike birds, they don't bring in material to build nests and, unlike mice, they don't gnaw wood, electrical cables or entrance holes but merely take advantage of existing gaps or holes. Problems of noise or smell are uncommon. All in all, they are considerate house guests. However, you can put up bat boxes to encourage them away from your house. If you're unsure if droppings in your home are bats or mice there's a simple trick to finding out! Bat droppings are made of insect exo-skeletons, and will crumble into dust if you roll it in the palm of your hand - or even better, shine a torch on it and it looks like glitter! Mouse droppings are hard and won't crumble into sparkling dust.

Disease

British bats have few diseases which could affect humans, and problems are very rare. However, in recent years a tiny number of bats have been detected with a rabies-like virus which can affect humans, so, for this reason, you are advised to avoid skin contact with bats or their saliva. Having bats in your roof does not put you at risk of this virus. The virus that caused COVID-19 has not been found in any of the UK's 17 breeding bat species and there are no known zoonotic coronaviruses found in UK bats. The COVID-19 virus hasn't been isolated in any of the bats species across the world. You can not catch COVID-19 from bats as the disease is transmitted by humans, not bats. More information: <https://www.bats.org.uk/>

Bat Facts!

The UK is home to 18 species of bat, the largest being the noctule which weighs the same as four £1 coins, and the smallest is the pipistrelle, which weighs as little as a 2p coin. This diminutive bat has a giant appetite, however – it is known to gobble up more than 500 insects in an hour!



Terry Whitaker/2020Vision

Bats like to roost in old hollow trees which are fewer in number in today's shrinking woodlands and tidy minded parks - and so therefore, fewer bats!

All bats and their roosts are fully protected by law because all species have declined, and some are threatened or endangered. Because bats return to the same places year after year a bat roost is protected even if there aren't bats there all the time. You must consult Natural England before you do anything which affects bats or their roosts in your house, such as building, alteration or maintenance work; re-roofing; remedial timber treatment; rewiring or plumbing. There will often be simple ways to avoid disturbing bats or their roosts, for instance by changing the timing of work, and using less poisonous insecticides. A CIEEM ecological consultant will be able to advise you and help you through the works.

This explanation should be regarded only as a guide to the law. For further details see the links below or refer to sections 9-11, 16-27 and 69 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or regulations 38-46 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994.

Natural England's excellent leaflet "Focus on Bats" can be downloaded from their website. Also see the Bat Conservation Trust's website, www.bats.org.uk

Build your own bat box and give a bat a safe place to roost

Installing a bat box will help local bats, encouraging them to move into areas that have limited roosting space. All our bats are insect-eaters, so having a few flitting around might just make those evenings in the garden a little less buggy!

TOP TIP:

Bats like to keep warm so a south facing tree/wall to put the box would be ideal - and make sure there are no drafts.

What you need:

- Untreated rough sawn timber
- Hammer
- Nails
- Tape measure and pencil

Make your own bat box



What you need:

- an adult to help you
- rough cut, untreated timber
- tape measure and pencil
- saw
- hammer and nails
- rubber flap
- odourless wood glue (optional)

IMPORTANT
Do not use wood stain or preservative anywhere on box

IT IS ILLEGAL TO DISTURB BATS WITHOUT A LICENSE - DO NOT INSPECT BOXES IF YOU THINK BATS ARE USING THEM

Look for droppings below to check for occupancy

Illustration: Corinne Welch © Copyright Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts 2015

All UK bats and their roosts are protected by law, which means it is illegal to harm or disturb them. Once up, a bat box cannot be opened legally without a licence. For more information on bats and the law call the Bat Helpline 0345 1300 228

Our vision is for a Herefordshire richer and more diverse in wildlife that is valued, and cared for, by its people to the benefit of all.

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust is a driving force for nature conservation in the county with over 5,000 members from across Herefordshire and beyond.

We're part of a national network of Wildlife Trusts. We campaign to protect wildlife and habitats both locally and nationally.

Together with our members and volunteers we work tirelessly to protect wildlife across Herefordshire, both on our 55 nature reserves and in partnership with other landowners.

55 nature reserves
5,000 mem-

300 active volunteers

534 hectares of land for wildlife

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

Get Involved!

Join Today! Becoming a member is a great way to help your local wildlife.

Volunteer: we are always looking for people to join our work parties carrying out practical management on our reserves - but we have other opportunities in our offices and at events too.

Contact us:
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01432 356872

www.herefordshirewt.org