

BATS IN CHURCHES

RECORDING BATS IN YOUR CHURCH



Made possible with

**Heritage
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Bat Conservation Trust



WHY RECORD BAT ACTIVITY IN YOUR CHURCH?

Recording your bats can help save you time, money and effort whenever you need to carry out works or repairs to your church.

The more you know about the bats in your church, the easier it will be to plan and arrange works, repairs, activities and bat mitigation.

If your works do require a professional ecologist, having good bat records will help them plan their surveys and may save you time and money in repeat surveys and ecologists' fees.

Many people are also fascinated by bats, so knowing more about your bats can be a great way to get people more interested in your church building.

HOW TO START

Anyone can start recording bat activity using the methods in this booklet. You don't need any specific skills or training to get started.

If you would like expert advice, you can start by contacting your local bat group via the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) website at bats.org.uk

You may also know someone in the local community, an ecologist, or naturalist, who would be willing to help.

WHAT SHOULD YOU RECORD?

WHEN bats are using your church

WHERE you see signs of bats in the church

WHERE do they come in and out

WHAT species of bats you have

ANY damage they are causing in the church

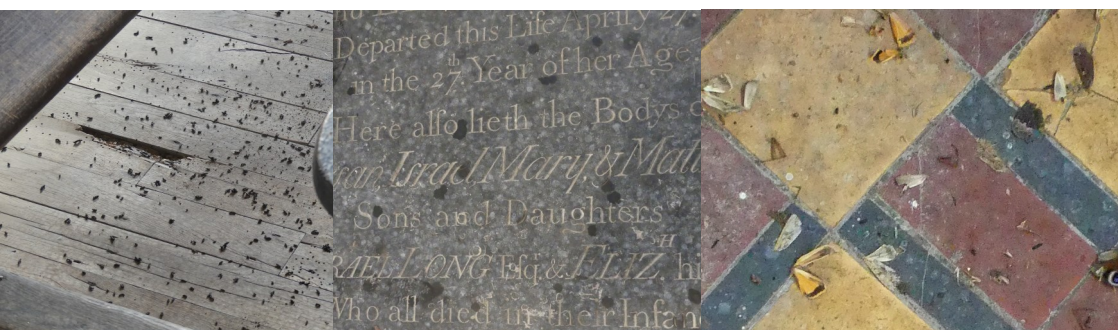
For more information batsinchurches.org.uk

SIGNS OF BATS INSIDE YOUR CHURCH

Droppings are usually a reliable sign of bats, although you may have bats and NEVER see droppings or urine. Bat droppings are usually DRY and will CRUMBLE if you crush them. They are often slightly GLITTERY and may have parts of insect legs or wings inside.

Bat urine is usually slightly sticky, in distinct spots rather than damp patches, and may leave a residue on wood and metal.

You may find piles of moth, butterfly or insect remains which are a good sign of feeding bats.



WHAT SPECIES DO YOU HAVE?

Identifying bat species takes practice and experience and you may need help from an expert. BCT has a number of guides for identifying bat species by sight/photographs, by their droppings, or by using a bat detector to identify their calls. The most common species in churches are Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared Bats.

**DON'T WORRY IF YOU CAN'T RECORD
EVERYTHING IN THIS BOOKLET, JUST DO AS
MUCH AS YOU FEEL YOU CAN. EVEN A FEW
CASUAL RECORDS CAN STILL BE USEFUL!**



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RECORDING DROPPINGS

The amount of droppings and the dates they appear can help you see when and how bats are using your church, and may help you find where they roost, or enter and exit the church. It's possible to identify bat species from droppings, but the amount of droppings is not usually a good guide to the actual number of bats in the church.

On a simple plan of your church RECORD:

WHERE droppings are. *Date 25th June Church Cleaned 11th June*
Recorded by B Chandler

HOW MANY droppings there are.

The DATE you recorded the droppings.

The DATE the CHURCH WAS LAST CLEANED.

TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS of droppings, with the date and location of your photographs.

Scattered droppings in nave

50+ droppings in chancel

Scattered droppings in south aisle

50+ droppings east end of south aisle see photos

EAST

You can do this regularly (e.g. before you clean), when you notice a change in the amount of droppings, or whenever you can.

RECORDING DAMAGE DUE TO BATS

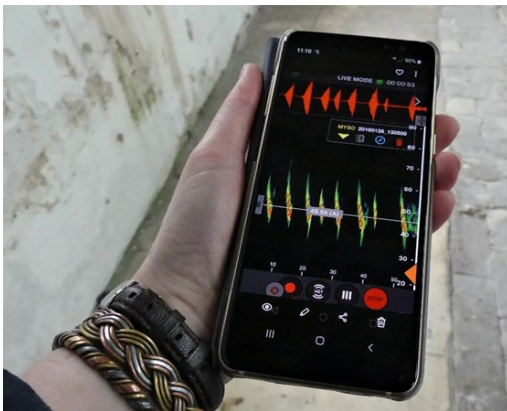
It is a good idea to keep a record of any damage caused by bats in your church. You can use a notebook or there are recording sheets in our cleaning guidelines, available online. This will help you keep track of the condition of any items, and if they deteriorate over time.

RECORDING ENTRY AND EXIT SITES

RECORD any time you see a bat leaving or entering the church. Bats may appear from eaves, under roof tiles or through gaps in doors and windows.

On a plan of the church RECORD any potential bat entry or exit points and when any new ones appear, for example, if a window pane is broken. It may be easier to get permission to repair these if you can show these are recent and not historical bat access points.

USING A BAT DETECTOR



Bats hunt and navigate using high frequency calls usually not audible to the human ear. These calls can be used to identify different species, similar to bird song, but it can take some practice as some of the calls are very similar.

A simple heterodyne bat detector that converts bat calls to a frequency you can hear should cost under £100. BCT run workshops on using detectors and your local bat group may be able to help with lending you equipment.

Bat detectors can help you identify the species of bat, and how much activity there is in the church, but are not a reliable method of counting the number of bats in your church.



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CARRYING OUT A SIMPLE SURVEY

You can carry out a simple survey outside your church. DAWN surveys can help you find entry points as bats swarm before entering the church, DUSK surveys may be more convenient. Common or Soprano Pipistrelles will often fly at dusk. Some species will only leave in darkness and will need to be surveyed with a bat detector or other specialist equipment.

Survey on a calm, dry night, the bats may not leave the church if it's raining or very windy. The best time to survey maternity roosts is in the summer, or when you see the most droppings in your church.

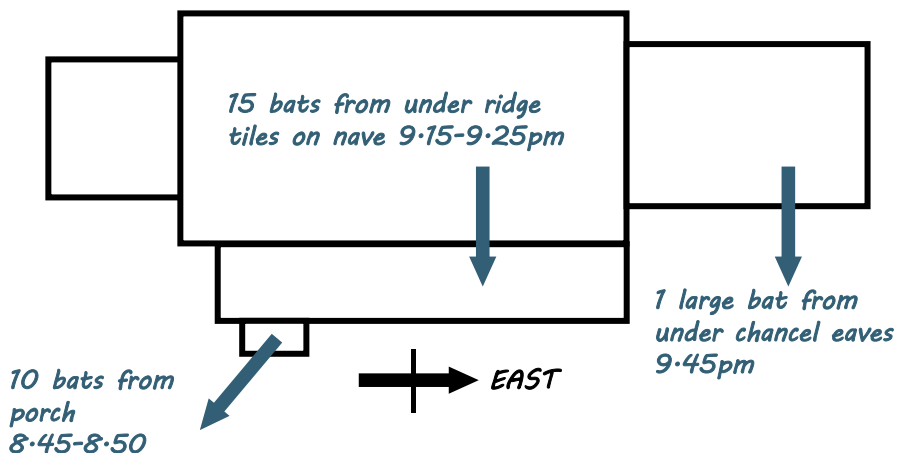
Start the survey around an hour before DUSK or DAWN.

Try to have enough people so you can see all sides of the church, or survey on more than one night looking at a different angle each time.

You can use a notebook but it may help to record your sightings on a simple plan of your church as shown below.

Date 25th June '22. Start 8:30pm End 10pm

Recorded by B Chandler, Jenny, Corrine Cloudy, dry, light breeze



Record the TIME and DATE and the WEATHER CONDITIONS.

Try to record the number of bats you see LEAVING and ENTERING the church, the TIME you saw each bat or group of bats, and the DIRECTION they flew in.



THE NATIONAL BAT MONITORING PROGRAMME

The National Bat Monitoring Programme surveys are run by BCT and can help you collect and store your records safely. Your records can also be used to help bat conservation nationally as well as in your church.

You can add information from a roost count or a sunset survey. BCT will send you full instructions and may be able to loan you equipment as well.

You can find more information, register, and add your survey results online at bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme

BCT also run training sessions both online and in person to help you gain confidence in using many of these different survey techniques and on completing the surveys.



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The Bats In Churches Project is a ground breaking,
multi-organisation partnership supported by the
National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Between 2019 and 2023 the Bats In Churches
Project worked with over 100 churches across
England to trial new, practical, tailored solutions to
reduce the impact of bats on churches and
communities, while still preserving and protecting
bat roosts.

The project created a wide range of advice,
guidelines, activities and other resources to help
and support all churches living with bats.

You can find more details at

batsinchurches.org.uk

**If you find a sick, injured or grounded bat in
your church call the National Bat Helpline**

0345 1300 228

bats.org.uk/advice/help-ive-found-a-bat

Images c Diana Spencer, Rose Riddell, et al/Bats In Churches, Chris Damant/Bernwood Ecology



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