



Bat Conservation Ireland contact details

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What to do if you find a bat on the ground or flying in your house

Bats are generally shy animals, so coming across a bat on the ground or flying inside a building during the daytime could mean that the bat needs some help. The following guidelines should help you to determine the best course of action.

Bats and the Law

All Irish bats are protected under the Wildlife Act 1973 and 2000 Amendment. Consequently, under normal situations, only licensed bat workers can handle bats. However, in cases of grounded bats, an unlicensed person can handle bats with care but please contact the Batline for advice.

Grounded bats

A bat found on the ground during the daytime is likely to be in trouble. Sometimes it may be that the bat is just exhausted and needs a secure place to recover. It may be injured and therefore it is best to take the animal into captivity temporarily and seek advice from the Batline. While bats are gentle creatures they are wild animals and therefore if in pain or in a panic state may try to defend themselves. Precautions should be taken so wear gloves and handle bats as little as possible.

Place a box over the bat and using a piece of card gently and carefully slide the bat into the box. Place a piece of cloth in one corner of the box to allow the bat a place of comfort to hide. Put a few small air holes in the lid and a very shallow container of water in another corner to prevent the bat from dehydrating. Once it is dark outside you can place the box open and on its side on top of a wall or shed (Bats can not take off from ground level so they should be placed at a high level, at least 5 feet off the ground). The bat can then crawl out of the box in its own time and fly away. If the bat does not fly away within 30 minutes, take the bat back inside and seek help from the Batline.

All Irish bats are very small and you may be surprised at the size. Baby bats are found in May, June and July. Bats found at any other time will be fully grown and independent. Baby bats have little or no fur. A good test is to blow gently on the fur and if it parts then it is unlikely to be a baby bat. If it is a baby bat the advice is needed straight away in order to locate and return it to the roost.

Young bats can be fed goat's milk while older bats should be fed mealworms (or dog food as a substitute). All bats should be given water or water with 10% glucose. Feeding should take place every 3-4 hours. While bats are in captivity, it is important to keep them in a warm place (e.g. the hot press). Injured bats should be returned to the area in which they were found once they have recovered.

Bats flying indoors

A bat flying in a room is looking for a way out. Close all doors to keep the bat confined to one room, open all windows within that room, dim the lights and allow all chances for the bat to find its own way out of the building.

Never try to catch a flying bat – you are likely to injure it

Sometimes a young bat will exhaust itself before finding a way out and may land on a wall or on a curtain to rest. In this case, you should place the bat in a box as described above and release at dusk.