

# BAT CONSERVATION IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT  
2020



BAT CONSERVATION  
IRELAND

**Our vision is  
for humans  
and bats to  
co-exist in  
harmony in  
Ireland**

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# WELCOME

**Brian Keeley**  
**Chair**

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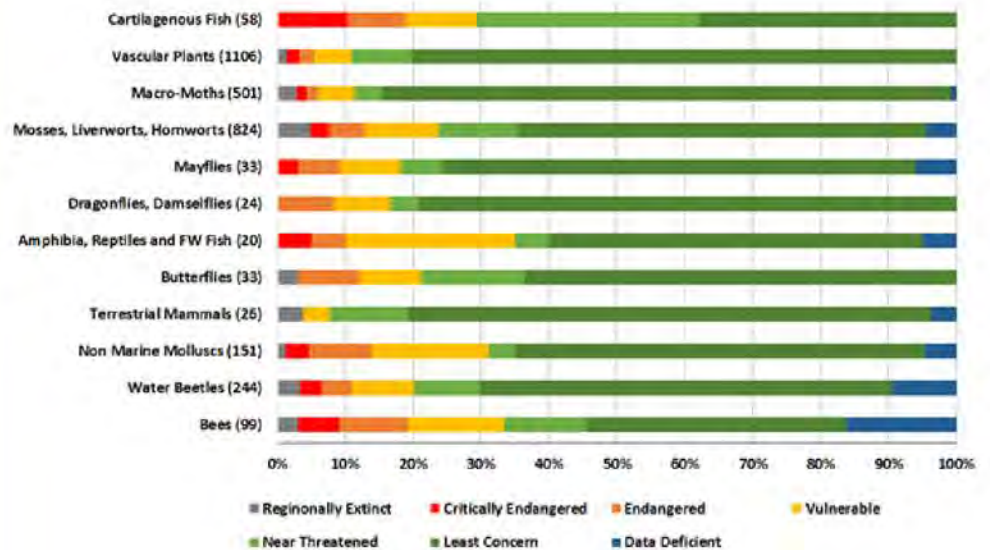


You could view our situation as beyond redemption. You could see the confluence of the consequences of our actions and inaction as an inevitable catastrophe. You would have very good grounds for sleepless nights worrying about the planet we are devastating. Or you could get up from your bed, watch some of the wonderful creatures of the night like Ireland's bats and see a very good reason for joining the fight to protect what still remains on our planet before it really is too late. It was calculated by one team of researchers that "on the basis of mid-range climate-warming scenarios for 2050, that 15-37% of species in the sample of regions and taxa that they studied will be 'committed to extinction' (Thomas et al in Nature". It would be interesting to propose that this conclusion comes about from the greater level of study into climate change in recent years. It is sad to discover that this report was published in 2004. We are facing into a future of enormous change and to save that future, we need to protect what we have at present. António Guterres, the UN secretary general said in January 2021, "2021 must be the year to reconcile humanity with nature," "Until now, we have been destroying our planet. We have been abusing it as if we have a spare one." This report therefore looks at the world when we hadn't yet turned that joyful corner whereat we realised that we had major work to do to protect our embattled mother planet.

Earth Justice lists the following as the key causes for our Biodiversity Crisis - Habitat destruction, over-utilisation, chemical pollution and climate change. We can see a build-up of problems for ourselves and other species in our continued need for more land, less natural habitat, more water and as the climate disimproves; new land away from the sea, big rivers and lakes and where it doesn't become too hot or too dry. This will see future changes for Ireland's bats as well as Ireland's people.

Below is a summary of the status of Ireland's flora and fauna. Of the species that have been assessed, one in every fifth species is threatened with extinction here.





Courtesy of National Biodiversity Data Centre

While bats would appear to be holding up better than other mammal species, it is only a matter of time for major declines to begin given that the conservation status of one third of our habitats afforded legal protection under the EU Habitats Directive dis-improved between 2007 and 2013.

Bat Conservation Ireland has been there to monitor our bat populations, to map the locations of the more endangered species, to promote the magnificence of bats and the amazing lives they live often unbeknownst to us.

As you peruse this report, you will see that we are helping in the fight against biodiversity loss by campaigning, by educating, by providing advice, by consulting with Government, County Councils, State bodies, ENGOs and by joining with others who have realised that it is time to give nature a helping hand.

As you read through this report, you will find more positivity than despair, more doing than lamenting. We in Bat Conservation Ireland welcome all to do whatever small amount you can to provide more plants, more ponds, more space for wildlife within our gardens and homes and around our work places.

We are still within the trauma of a global pandemic and this has had impacts upon the nature of BC Ireland's activities. But as you will see, there has been no lockdown of our hopes and imagination and we have "reached out" to people in a socially responsible way to put the positive message for bats out to Ireland and beyond.

**BRIAN KEELEY**  
Chair

# ABOUT US



BAT CONSERVATION IRELAND

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## Mission Statement

*Bat Conservation Ireland is an independent, non-profit, charity that is Ireland's leading authority on bats. We conduct monitoring and research to increase knowledge of all Irish bat species, and work to secure and expand existing bat populations, and where feasible to extend their ranges. We aim to develop a genuine and widespread understanding and appreciation of bats amongst the public, state agencies and other organisations, and to secure consistent protection of all bat species and the ecological infrastructure necessary to support them.*

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# Objectives

Bat Conservation Ireland's main objective is *'the advancement of education and the promotion of the conservation and study of bats on the island of Ireland and elsewhere in the world'*.

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This is carried out through:

**Education:** Disseminating education materials;

**Community Engagement:** Giving talks and leading bat walks;

**Conservation:** Carrying out nationwide surveys and monitoring of bats;

**Collaboration:** Acting as an umbrella group for local bat groups;

**Data Research:** Providing a central repository for bat records.



# Values

## A core set of values guides all aspects of the work of Bat Conservation Ireland

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**Professionalism:** We are committed to promoting the conservation of bats and bat habitats through science-based education, emerging research and contemporary best practices;

**Collaboration:** Together we are stronger and through collaboration our work is better as we strive to achieve our collective goals;

**Learning:** By learning from our experiences and each other, and implementing those learnings, we are continuously moving forward, innovating, and improving;

**Respect:** We foster and safeguard a culture where everyone's contributions and relationships are respectful and respected;

**Integrity:** We consistently conduct ourselves ethically with honesty, openness, fairness and accountability;

**Diversity:** We value the different ideas, strengths, interests, and cultural backgrounds that make our organisation successful. We welcome healthy debate and differences of opinion;

**Reflection:** We continuously monitor and evaluate our plans and performance to ensure that we meet our goals efficiently and effectively.



# GOVERNANCE

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Bat Conservation Ireland is managed by a Governing Council, who oversee the day-to-day running of the organisation.

Council for 2020 were:

Chair:	Brian Keeley (Company Director)
Vice-Chair:	Caroline Shiel (Company Director)
Treasurer:	Chris Peppiatt (Company Director)
Company Secretary:	John Curtin Anna Collins Emma Boston Miriam Ahern (appointed December 2020) Paul Scott (resigned in September 2020) Andrew Fenner (resigned December 2020)

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Charity No:	CHY No: 13016
Company No:	494343
Charity Registered No:	20039417
Tax Reference No:	9781345A
Tax Clearance No:	838778
Registered Office:	Carmichael Centre, 4-7, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7
Auditors & Company Law Advisors :	O'Dwyer Delaney, Auditors & Accountants, 33, Fitzwilliam Street Upper, Dublin D02 TF82
Bankers:	Bank of Ireland, Ashbourne, Co. Meath

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We are members of the following organisations:

- Irish Environmental Network
  - The Wheel
  - Affiliated with: Bat Life Europe
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*Bat Conservation Ireland has adopted and implemented the Charities Governance Code issued by the Charities Regulator. It will report on its compliance with the code formally as required by the regulator in 2021.*

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Brian Keeley



Caroline Shiel



Chris Peppiatt



John Curtin



Anna Collins



Emma Boston



Miriam Ahern

# SNAPSHOT OF 2020

## CONSERVATION

- 4 Monitoring Schemes
- 427 Volunteers
- 833 Surveys completed

- 572 Queries Answered
- 146,000 website page views
- 45,893 website users

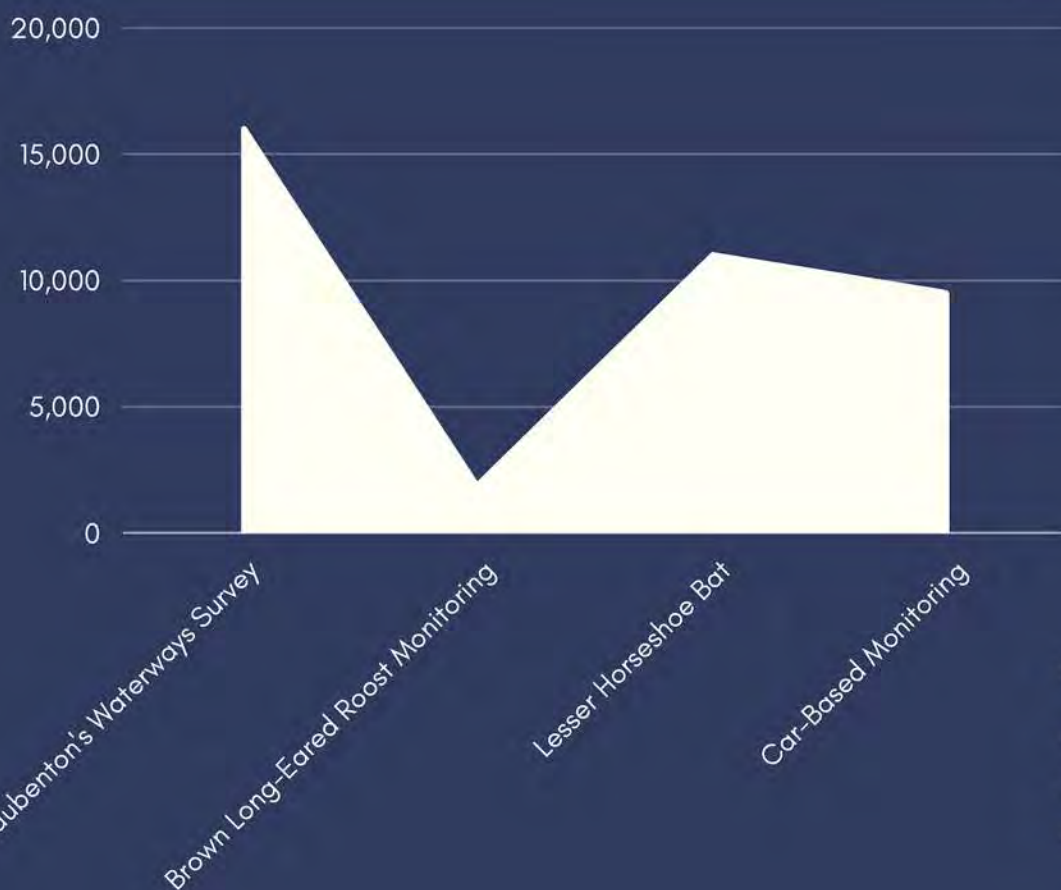
## EDUCATION

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 10 active bat groups;
- 12,000 followers on social media

- Holds over 49,000 bat records
- Research collaborations with QUB and UCD
- Member of EU COST Action Network: CLIMBATS

## RESEARCH & DATA



**FIGURE 1.**

*Number of Bat Passes and Bat Counts Recorded during Summer Monitoring in 2020*



# **Main Objectives pursued and achieved during 2020**

**education**

**conservation**

**community engagement**

**research**

**collaboration**

# EDUCATION

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Ireland currently is home to 9 resident species of bat, all of which are protected under the Wildlife Act 1976 and subsequent amendments. It is an offence to intentionally disturb, injure or kill a bat or disturb its resting place.

Levels of education in Ireland differ in terms of knowledge that bats are resident here and also around their protected status. A substantial proportion of Bat Conservation Ireland's work is dedicated to educating the public about bats and addressing conflict that can sometimes arise between bats and householders, where bats are very likely to roost.

Our educational activities include the following:

- Answering bat-related queries through our website and Facebook page;
- Facilitating and updating educational material through 2 websites:
  - Bat Conservation Ireland; and
  - Learn About Bats;
- Organising bat walks and talks for the general public;
- Conducting and participating in seminars and workshops to facilitate additional learning for our members and the wider public;
- Issuing a quarterly Newsletter to our members, containing the latest information about our work and bat-related developments in Ireland and abroad;
- Hosting our triennial bat conference to bring together bat experts and share latest research and data;





# EDUCATION

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## Queries

Bat Conservation Ireland operates a queries service through email and our social media platforms, which is facilitated by its staff members. While each query is individual in nature, in general queries can fall into a number of different categories as follows:

1. Householders who have a bat roost in their house and either
  - a. need further information;
  - b. the roost has become problematic and they need advice about what to do;
  - c. bats are entering the dwelling space in their house and they need advice;
  - d. they want to carry out works to their property and need further advice;
  - e. they want the bats removed and relocated.
2. A member of the public has found a grounded bat and needs further advice;
3. A member of the public wants to object to planning permission and either
  - requests assistance from Bat Conservation Ireland; or
  - need further information in relation to bats and planning permission
4. A member or member of the public wants to learn more about bats and would like more information on any courses run by Bat Conservation Ireland or educational materials for children
5. Student enquiries about internships or participation in research projects

In 2020 staff dealt with approximately 572 queries; 484 by e-mail through our website and 88 through our Facebook messenger.

Bat Conservation Ireland, see this service as vital to educating the general public around bats status as a protected species, which in the long-term leads to better outcomes for bats.

# EDUCATION

## Online Presence - website

Bat Conservation Ireland's main website - [www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org) - provides general information about the organisation and what we do and also provides general information about bats and more specifically to householders on bat roosts. Our website is an effective educational tool, as the following statistics will verify:

Page Views: 146,371

Unique Page Views: 114,262

Bat Sightings Recorded: 282

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Bat Conservation Ireland website. At the top, a dark red banner contains the text: "An all-Ireland charity that promotes the conservation of bats and their habitats". Below this is the logo for Bat Conservation Ireland, featuring a stylized bat silhouette and the text "BAT CONSERVATION IRELAND". To the right of the logo are navigation buttons for "JOIN", "DONATE", "SHOP", and social media icons for Facebook and Twitter. A shopping cart icon indicates "0 ITEMS - €0.00". Below the navigation is a horizontal menu with categories: "Who We Are", "What We Do", "Irish Bats", "Get Involved", "In Your Area", and "Search". The main content area is divided into three columns. The first column, titled "WHAT IS A BAT?", contains text describing bats as mammals and includes a button "Find out more about bats" and an image of a bat in flight. The second column, titled "NEED ADVICE ABOUT A BAT ROOST?", contains text offering help with bat roost questions and includes a button "Give me some advice" and an image of a bat's face. The third column, titled "FOUND A GROUNDED BAT?", contains text about finding bats on the ground and includes a button "What to do with grounded bats" and an image of a bat on the ground.



# EDUCATION

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Bat Conservation Ireland runs a website that provides educational material for our younger bat enthusiasts, aged 6 - 12 - [www.learnaboutbats.org](http://www.learnaboutbats.org). Children can learn about bats and their lifecycle, download materials, which provide a fun way to enhance their learning and there is also a resource section for teachers, providing materials they can bring into the classroom. The statistics in 2020, for Learn About Bats are as follows:

Page Views: 30,732

Unique Page Views: 23,331



**Learn About Bats**  
with Bat Conservation Ireland

# EDUCATION

## Online Presence - Social Media

Bat Conservation Ireland's runs two social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook provides us with the opportunity to engage more on a community level, with members, supporters and across our 10 bat groups. Twitter, on the other hand, gives us the opportunity to reach out more to the science-based community and share more of our research projects, data and papers.

In 2020, we had a large increase in our social media following over the course of the year. Followers increased by over 1,000 to 7,630 and our page likes increased similarly by over 1,000 to 7,603.





# EDUCATION

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## Events

2020 was a difficult year for Bat Conservation Ireland in terms of running events for our members, supporters and the wider public. Covid 19 restrictions saw the country go into a strict lockdown, with any public events or gatherings being banned. The Council took the decision shortly after the first lockdown in March/April to have a moratorium on any group activities over the summer of 2020, which is normally Bat Conservation Ireland's busiest time. This meant that most of our necessary training and educational events had to go online. Bat walks and talks really don't lend themselves well to an online forum, as the sights, sounds and experience of a bat walk is best carried out in-person. Additionally, we had to postpone our triennial bat conference, which was scheduled to be held in October 2020.

Instead, from March onwards we carried out a number of educational activities and events online.

Key Events for Bat Conservation Ireland in 2020 were:

- Nature Heros Event at the National Museum of Ireland, Natural History
- Digital Biodiversity Week
- Digital Heritage Week
- Irish Bat Monitoring Programme Training
- The Big Bat Night Map for International Bat Night
- Bat Myths Dispelled Hallowe'en Campaign
- Batty for Hallow'e'n Competition

# EDUCATION

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## Nature Heros Event

In February 2020, Bat Conservation Ireland participated in an education day at the Museum of Natural History. A number of different wildlife organisations attended and gave presentations. Kildare Bat Group gave a presentation on bats and along with BCIreland hosted an information stand. 2,974 visitors attended the day.



Kildare Bat Group with BCIreland Admin Manager

## Biodiversity Week 2020

Biodiversity Week is normally a key week in the calendar for Bat Conservation Ireland in terms of hosting bat walks and talks at various locations around the country. Unfortunately in 2020, it was not possible to carry out group events during this week, so we tested the online waters, by running a different series of education activities, on social media from 16 May – 29 May 2020, as follows:

🦇 Bat Detector Skills Videos 🦇  
🦇 Bat Facts 🦇 Natural World  
Our Solutions are in Nature



©Frank Greenaway

Learn About Bats Website

The Big Bat Draw

- Launch of Biodiversity Week by promoting our 'Learn About Bats' website, to engage our younger supporters;
- Created 3 online videos 'An Introduction to Bat Detectors', 'Listening to Pipistrelles Using Bat Detectors' and 'Identifying Daubenton's Bat' as a way for members and supporters to learn how to use a bat detector and get out and detect bats in their local area or carrying out some bat watching;

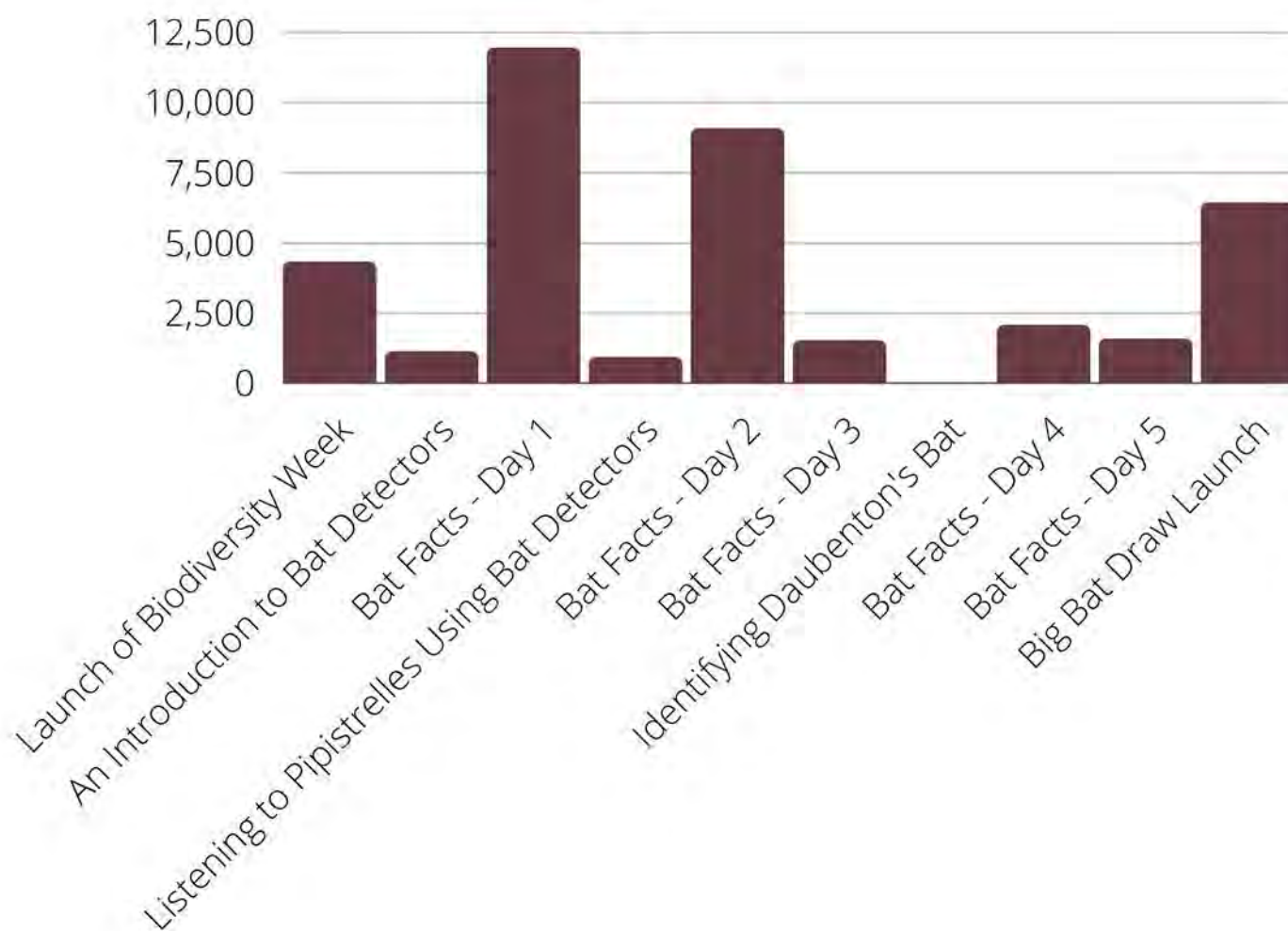


# EDUCATION

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- Created online social media content on 'Bat Facts', which ran over 5 days, to educate both our younger and older supporters about unique facts specific to bats;
- Launched 'The Big Bat Draw' which was an art competition open to those up to the age of 16, with a theme being 'What I love about Irish bats!' to help develop our younger supporters in the world of bats, but also to think about them in a more substantial way

We had excellent online reach with this education programme, as the following statistics confirm:



# EDUCATION

## Heritage Week 2020

Heritage Week is a great opportunity for Bat Conservation Ireland to educate the public about bats and older buildings and structures which are common places to find bat roosts.

It is important that our heritage sites, buildings and structures are preserved, not only to protect our cultural heritage, but also to protect the wildlife that call it home (at least for some part of the year!).

Heritage Week is an important week in our yearly calendar, where we carry out many bat walks and talks, often at heritage sites to highlight their importance and need for preservation.

Unfortunately, in 2020, due to the situation with Covid 19, we did not carry out any group activities for Heritage Week, but instead ran an online social media campaign.

Posts included information about bats and old buildings, bats and bridges, re-posting of our educational videos about bats and we finished off the week by celebrating

'International Bat Night'. For International Bat Night we asked our members and supporters to use the bat sightings form on our website to post sightings of bats in their local area. Our reach for these posts extended to 27,130, with 1,681 engagements.





# EDUCATION

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## Training

Bat Conservation Ireland runs Ireland's only All-Ireland bat monitoring programme, as part of our conservation efforts. Volunteers are essential for us to carry out the level of monitoring that we do. Every year new volunteers are trained as part of this programme and this not only helps create more citizen scientists around the country, but also helps develop unique skills for those involved.

In 2020, 2 online training sessions were carried out to train new volunteers on the Car-Based Monitoring Scheme and 2 online training sessions were carried out for the All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey.

Bat Conservation Ireland also carries out other training courses in any given year, such as bat roost identification and bat detector workshops. As these courses do not lend well to being carried out online, we were unable to run them in 2020, due to Covid restrictions.

## Hallowe'en Events

For Hallowe'en as part of our online educational events, we ran a small social media campaign to dispel the common myths and misconceptions around bats. We also ran a competition for children and adults to make the best bat-themed Hallowe'en decoration. These are important parts of our educational work, as they work on a more subtle level of providing educational opportunities around bats.



# EDUCATION

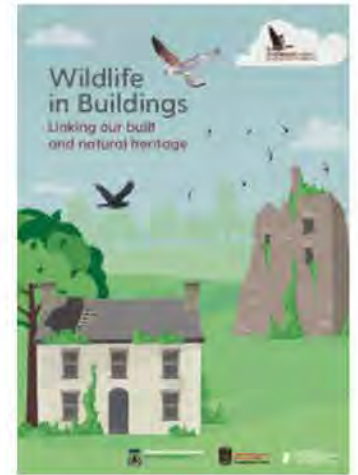
## Publications

Bat Conservation Ireland contributed to a number of publications in 2020, as follows:

### Wildlife in Buildings

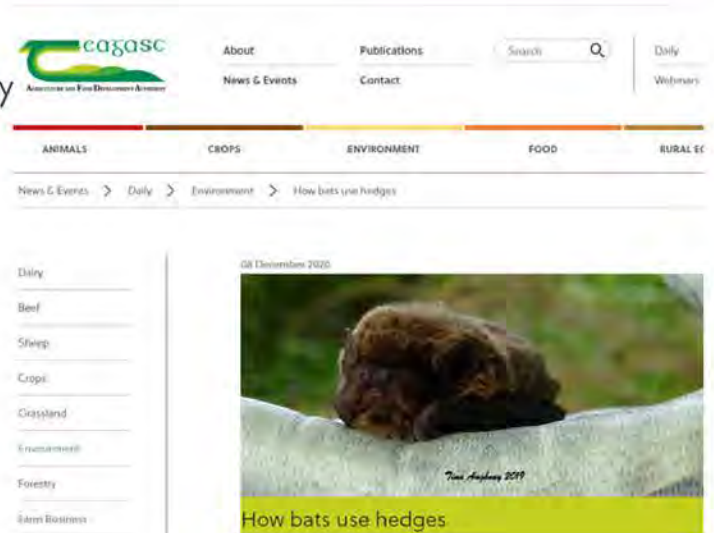
Dr. Tina Aughney contributed to this publication produced by Bird Watch Ireland, which sought to link our built and natural heritage.

<https://birdwatchireland.ie/wildlife-in-buildings/>



### How Bats Use Hedges

As part of Hedgerow Week, Dr. Tina Aughney wrote a piece for Teagasc on 'How Bats Use Hedges' - <https://www.teagasc.ie/news--events/daily/environment/how-bats-use-hedges.php>





# EDUCATION

## Training Videos

As the Covid 19 restrictions put limitations on in-person training and group activities, Tina Aughney developed a suite of educational training videos to fill this gap. These short videos were primarily developed for Biodiversity Week 2020, to offer a replacement for the host of bat walks that are normally conducted during this week.

Three videos were developed as follows:

- An Introduction to Bat Detectors;
- Listening to Pipistrelle Bats Using Bat Detectors; and
- Identifying Daubenton's Bats

Statistics for these videos during Biodiversity Week were as follows:

Post	Reach	Engagement	Shares	Views*
Video - An Introduction to Bat Detectors	1,114	143	9	73
Video - Listening to Pipistrelles Using Bat Detectors	907	130	9	48
Video - Daubenton's Bats	783	61	7	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,804</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>164</b>

\*Views were on the videos on our YouTube Channel, all other stats are from our Facebook Page



Tina Aughney - 'An Introduction to Bat Detectors'



Tina Aughney - 'Listening to Pipistrelles Using Bat Detectors'

# EDUCATION

## Media

It was an interesting year for bat conservation, considering the outbreak of Covid 19.

Despite the unconfirmed links to bats as a potential reservoir for Covid 19, the discussion in the Irish media remained relatively measured. Bat Conservation Ireland released a statement on Irish bats and Covid 19 to help allay any fears around bats in Ireland - <https://www.batconservationireland.org/latest-news/irish-bats-and-covid19>.

Additional media which featured Bat Conservation Ireland, or which we contributed to were:

- Dark Sky Series for the Great Outdoors Programme - Connemara Community Radio - 20 August 2020
- We are going wild this week - RTE website - 23 August 2020
- Bats can eat 3,000 insects a night - RTE website - 26 August 2020



### Bats can eat 3,000 insects a night!

Updated / Wednesday, 26 Aug 2020 10:04



Tina Aughney demonstrating how to listen to bats using a bat detector



# EDUCATION


- 'The Big Bat Night Map' for International Bat Night - LMFM 27 August 2020
- They've got a bat reputation - RTE website - 27 October 2020

LEARN • School Hub Junior Cycle Senior Cycle About RTÉ Learn

## They've got a bat reputation

Updated / Tuesday, 27 Oct 2020 17:40

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BAT HOSPITAL

Susan Kerwin of Bat Rehabilitation Ireland giving a tour of her bat hospital in Limerick

## Irish bat conference 2020

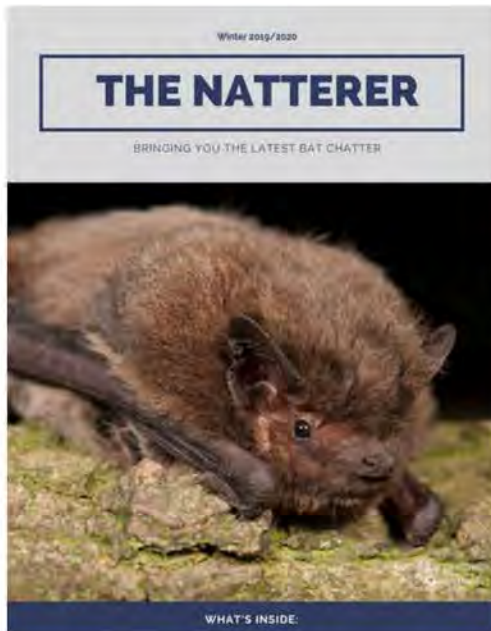
Every 3 years, Bat Conservation Ireland hosts a bat conference, to bring together researchers, academics, ecologists, bat workers, volunteers and all those interested in all things bat-related as a information-exchange and learning forum. Unfortunately due to the Covid 19 restrictions in place, the Council decided to postpone the event. There is great value in bat enthusiasts coming together in person and it was felt that this vital component would be lost if the conference was put online. We are looking forward to hosting this conference when public health guidelines allow.

# EDUCATION

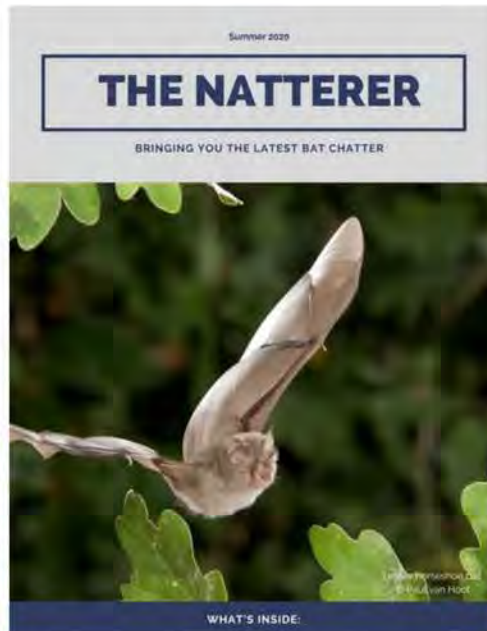
## Newsletter

Bat Conservation Ireland publishes a quarterly newsletter to update members about the work that we are doing and to share the latest information about developments in the world of bat conservation. In 2020 we published 4 newsletters as follows:

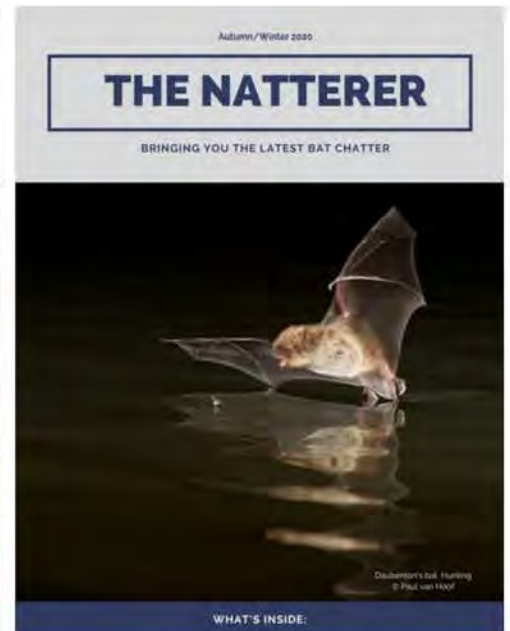
- The Natterer Winter 2019/2020
- The Natterer Spring 2020
- The Natterer Summer 2020
- The Natterer Autumn/Winter 2020



Part of the Union - 3    Bat Roost Diary - 6    Bat Boxes - 9    Bat Group Spotlight - 13



Focus on the Natterer's Bat - 3    Big Bat Night Map Results - 5    Bat Group Spotlight - 9



Bats and Bridges - 3    Backyard Winter Bat Survey - 11    Bat-Based Monitoring Scheme: A Volunteer's Perspective - 14



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Bat Groups

There are currently 10 bat groups around the country that are affiliated with Bat Conservation Ireland. Bat Groups such as Galway Bat Group and Cork Bat Group preceded the foundation of BC Ireland, with Galway Bat Group going back to the 1980's. The Bat Groups offer the opportunity to members to get more involved in activities in their local communities, as well as develop their bat-related skills, such as carrying out roost counts and bat surveys. It is also an opportunity for like minded individuals to come together around a shared interest in biodiversity and our natural wildlife.

The bat groups currently affiliated with Bat Conservation Ireland are:

- Cavan Bat Group
- Donegal Bat Group
- Dublin Bat Group
- Galway Bat Group
- Kildare Bat Group
- Limerick Bat Group
- Mayo Bat Group
- Meath Bat Group
- Midlands Bat Group
- Wicklow Bat Group



Unfortunately, 2020 was a very difficult year for our Bat Groups, with a substantial proportion of their activities curtailed due to Covid 19 restrictions. They did, however, make the most of the situation and the following highlights activities they were involved in.

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# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Cavan Bat Group

No public education activities were undertaken by Cavan Bat Group in 2020. They did, however participate in 4 All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey and 2 Brown Long-Eared Bat Roost Counts as follows:

1. All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey - Deerpark Woodland, Virginia, Co. Cavan
2. All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey - Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan
3. All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey - Belturbet, Co. Cavan
4. All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey - Nine Eye Bridge, Virginia, Co. Cavan
5. Brown Long-Eared Bat Roost Count - Drung Catholic Church, Co. Cavan
6. Brown Long-Eared Bat Roost Count - Bailieboro Catholic Church, Co. Cavan



Nine Eye Bridge, River Blackwater, Virginia, Co. Cavan



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Dublin Bat Group

Dublin Bat Group intended to undertake a series of surveys of parks in Dublin with the aim of completing tree roost inspections and creating a tree potential roost feature database akin to that compiled by Henry Andrews in the UK (Bat Tree Habitat Key). Scoping surveys were completed in Fernhill Park in Dún Laoghaire on 18th January 2020 and in Bushy Park in Dublin City on 26th January 2020. A tree roost inspection training session was run by experienced and licensed members of the group (under licence DER/Bat 2020-5) in Fernhill Park on 1st March 2020, with less experienced group members partaking. No further surveys were completed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 emergency which precluded group activities from 12th March 2020 onwards.



New heights reached, DBG surveying trees in Bushy Park, 26th January 2020



Members of DBG inspecting a tree cavity under supervision of licence holders.

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Dublin Bat Group

Additional activities carried out by Dublin Bat Group before the first Covid 19 lockdown were as follows:



- Tree roost inspection training for DBG members at Fernhill Park, Sandyford, Co. Dublin
- Internal Roost Survey, Áras an Uachtaráin

Dublin Bat Group have their own Facebook Page and Instagram account. They had limited posts in 2020 due to lack of activity because of restrictions. Post reach ranged from 119 to 195. Despite this, page follows increased from 604 to 854. They had 457 Instagram followers.

Additionally DBG received €1,000 in funding from Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council in 2020, which will be carried forward to 2021 for the group's activities.



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Galway Bat Group

Similarly to other bat groups, Galway Bat Group carried out limited activities in what is usually a very busy calendar of events. They carried out 2 Brown Long-Eared Roost Counts at Lydacan Castle, Galway over the summer 2020.



Additionally, Galway Bat Group received funding of €300 from the Vincent Wildlife Trust to purchase a quality tablet to use on bat walks so that bat sounds can be played for attendees, especially if there are no bats present on the evening of the walk.

Galway Bat Group were very active on their Facebook Page over the course of the year, sharing Bat Conservation Ireland posts, research and general information about bats.



Bat Walk by Galway Bat Group pre-Covid

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Kildare Bat Group

Despite having an extensive programme of events planned for 2020, Kildare Bat Group unfortunately had to cancel the majority of these due to Covid 19 restrictions. They did, however carry out a number of activities compliant with restrictions in place at the time, as follows:



### **Bat Box Inspections:**

11 April 2020 - Newbridge Tidy Towns Bat Box inspection & monitoring

19 August 2020 - Query regarding wooden bat roost boxes in Newbridge

20 August 2020 - Checked Monasterevin bat roost boxes in the Gerald Manley Hopkins Garden for occupancy in regard to tree felling after deliberations with NPWS & Bat Conservation Ireland Council

14 November 2020 - Bat Box installation in Moyglare Abbey, housing estate.

12 December 2020 - Supervised Tree Felling under NPWS Derogation License in Monasterevin

### **Group Training**

July 2020 - Group Bat Training at Linear Park, Newbridge

Members of KBG made the most of lockdown and attended a number of online courses to upgrade their skills:

- Child Safe Guarding Level 1, 2 and 3
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
- WRI Orphans Course: Bat Health Session
- Working at heights training course
- Bats Mitigation and Compensation



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Kildare Bat Group

- Introduction to Bat World Rescue Sanctuary Conservation Bat Rehabilitation Virtual Workshop.
- Let's Go Bats Seminar
- Wild Life Acoustics: The Physics of Sound
- Wildlife Crimes & Conservation Conference
- Online Digital Tools Training
- Communities Caring for Water Conference (Rivers Trust & LAWPRO) – online conference
- Introductory Bat Detector Workshop
- Wildwood Ecology Service: Bat Workers, Health & Safety, A Wild care Video Series – Keeping You Safe

### **Bat Rehabilitation**

A number of calls were received by Kildare Bat Group regarding injured bats and grounded bat and pups.

Additionally, Kildare Bat Group carried out 2 Brown Long-Eared Roost Counts at Clonghrinka, Co. Kildare and various surveys for the All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey, as part of Bat Conservation Ireland's monitoring programme.

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Limerick Bat Group

Despite not being able to get out on bat walks and carry out other group activities, Limerick Bat Group were very active on social media, posting videos on their Facebook page, sharing lots of posts on Facebook and promoting bats in through their professional work.



Bat Walk by Limerick Bat Group pre-Covid

Albert Nolan of Limerick Bat Group writes a column 'Wild About Wildlife' for the Limerick Leader and bats feature regularly in this column. Specific columns that featured bats are as follows:

- Going Batty for Warm Weather - 12 April 2020
- The Hebrew Character Moth - 9 May 2020
- Celebrating the Dawn Chorus - 23 May 2020
- Celebrating Science Week in Limerick - 29 November 2020

Albert also promoted bats through his work in schools.

Bat Rehabilitation Ireland is run by Limerick Bat Group member, Susan Kerwin and Susan promoted bat conservation through her work with Bat Rehabilitation Ireland and Kildare Wildlife Unit. An article in the Limerick Leader on 12 November 2020 - 'Kind-hearted Susan sets up bat sanctuary at her home in Limerick' - also focused on the bat rehabilitation work carried out by Bat Rehabilitation Ireland.



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Mayo Bat Group

Mayo Bat Group is still in it's infancy and the situation with Covid 19 in 2020, unfortunately did not offer the opportunity to grow and develop the group. However, Mayo Bat Group went online also and were active on their Facebook Page, sharing information and awareness around bats and bat rehabilitation.



Bat Conservation Ireland also set up a fundraising page for Mayo Bat Group to raise funds to build a bat clinic in Mayo.

May Bat group took 6 bats into care and successfully released 4 in 2020.



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Meath Bat Group

Meath Bat Group were also hoping to expand their activities and membership in 2020, however Covid 19 interrupted this plan.

Meath Bat Group did participate in the All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey, carrying out a survey in Moynalty, Co. Meath

## Midland Bat Group

Midland Bat Group were also constricted by Covid 19, but were very involved in Bat Conservation Ireland's monitoring schemes as follows:

- All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey  
– various locations
- Brown Long-Eared Bat Roost Count –  
St. Catherine's Church, Ballymacormack, Co. Longford
- Car Based Monitoring Survey – M87 covering Longford, Leitrim and Roscommon



Midland Bat Group pre-Covid

## Wicklow Bat Group

Wicklow Bat Group also restricted by Covid 19, were active online posting informative bat and biodiversity posts to the Wicklow Bat Group Facebook page.



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Citizen Scientist Bat Surveyors

The All-Ireland Bat Monitoring Programme, relies on volunteers to complete surveys, where we train volunteers and give them the skills to carry out surveys on 3 of the 4 schemes managed by Bat Conservation Ireland. Without volunteers, we could not monitor Ireland's bat populations or map their distribution. We are greatly in debt to Irish citizen scientists who gladly give up their time to complete surveys. In any given summer season there can be up to 600 volunteers participating in the numerous schemes we manage. In 2020, 427 volunteers contributed their time and skill to participate in the All Ireland Bat Monitoring Programme.



CBM Surveyors pre-Covid

Training is provided for volunteers in a tiered manner, allowing volunteers to participate in schemes according to their level of expertise. Participation in the All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterways Survey is the first step for novice volunteers whereby, once completed, each surveyor can identify one species of bat, Daubenton's bat, in flight over waterways. Training consists of an evening lecture followed by field work after dusk.

Once surveyors have expressed an interest in further developing their skills they can participate in training and workshops for other monitoring schemes. Volunteers are also encouraged to join their local bat group to gain further experience. In 2020, training courses were carried out online, the majority of these were for Irish Bat Monitoring Programme surveys.

# CONSERVATION

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## Irish Bat Monitoring Programme

Bat Conservation Ireland's main objective is *the advancement of education and the promotion of the conservation and study of bats on the island of Ireland and elsewhere in the world*. As part of this objective, we monitor Ireland's bats to see how their populations are doing, e.g. are populations increasing, decreasing, or remaining stable. Regular monitoring is the key to picking up any declining (or increasing) trends, which are in turn, important in forming conservation policy and management on a nationwide and EU level. Bat Conservation Ireland manages four monitoring schemes to track trends in bat populations as follows:

1. Car-Based Monitoring;
2. The All-Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterways Survey;
3. Brown Long-Eared Bat Roost Monitoring;
4. Lesser Horseshoe Bat Roost Monitoring

### Car-Based Monitoring

Despite high levels of legal protection for all species, until 2003 there was no systematic monitoring of any species apart from the lesser horseshoe bat in Ireland. To redress this imbalance, The Car-based Bat Monitoring Scheme was first piloted in 2003 and targets the two most abundant pipistrelle species (common and soprano pipistrelles) and Leisler's bat. These species are relatively easy to detect and distinguish from each other on the basis of echolocation calls. The car-based survey makes use of a broadband bat detector, which picks up a range of ultrasound that can be recorded in the field and analysed post-survey. This method allows survey work to be carried out by individuals with little or no experience in bat identification since identification is completed post survey work. Nonetheless, all surveyors are fully trained in carrying out the survey method, which can be tricky to implement initially, and are provided with a full set of equipment in order to complete the survey. In this way, results are standardised across the island.



# CONSERVATION

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In 2020, we underwent an equipment upgrade to a new detector. This means that many surveyors in the past couple of years have been using two sets of equipment simultaneously so that we can ensure the datasets from the old and new equipment are fully compatible.

## **Summary of the Car Based Monitoring Scheme 2020**

Weather in 2020 was changeable with high rainfall at times, particularly in August. For the most part, however, field surveys were not negatively impacted.

For the Car-Based Bat Monitoring Scheme 52 individuals participated in surveys of 26 squares around the island. 2020 was the first year when only Batlogger detectors were used. Online training courses were provided in 2020 for two new teams, and revision training was provided to one team, also via Zoom. Data from 47 surveys, most of which had >12 completed transects, were available. In total 9,500 bat passes were recorded, 48% of which were common pipistrelles. The soprano pipistrelle was second most frequently recorded bat species and Leisler's the third most common.

Trends were analysed using a combination of data from both Tranquility and Batlogger detectors, using a covariate to account for differences in the two. Yearly estimates of most species increased in 2020. Confidence intervals of the three target species, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and Leisler's bats were all above their baseline indices indicating they each showed a significantly increasing trend.

Nathusius' pipistrelle trends are still unclear but seem to show signs of slight increases, whilst the brown long-eared roadside trend in 2020 was reasonably stable. Numbers of observations of both these species are extremely low using the car-based method, leading to wide error bars.

The yearly estimate for the *Myotis* spp. group increased a little on 2019 but overall the smoothed trend for this group is still well below the baseline. While this method records relatively few of these species every year, since 2015 there has been a decrease and narrowing of confidence intervals that suggests observed declines are consistent across many sites.



# CONSERVATION

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## **The All-Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterways Survey**

This scheme follows a survey methodology devised by Bat Conservation Trust (BCT UK). Narrow band, heterodyne detectors are used so volunteers who conduct the survey are trained in the identification of Daubenton's bat prior to field work. Surveyors count the number 'bat passes' of this bat species for 4 minutes at each of the ten fixed points on linear waterways. The onset of this scheme was a very significant development in bat monitoring here, since it represented the first large-scale recruitment of members of the Irish public to bat conservation-related work.

## **Summary of the All-Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterways Survey 2020**

Training courses were carried out online as part of the All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterway Monitoring Scheme in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Despite some rivers flooding in the latter half of the month, a high number of Daubenton's bat surveys were completed. 230 waterway sites were surveyed by 162 teams in 2020. Of these 230 sites waterway sites, 187 were surveyed twice in the month of August. 16,000 'Sure' Daubenton's bat passes were recorded on 210 waterway sites (91%). All-Island Daubenton's bat numbers showed evidence of a decline from 2006 to 2008 but in 2009-2011 numbers recovered a little.

Further slight decreases were noted again from 2012 to 2014 while 2015 and 2016 saw a moderate recovery. However there has been a slight dip in the curve since and this continued in 2020. Overall the trend line appears to be fairly steady from year to year with error bars consistently encompassing the baseline.

## **Brown Long-eared Bat Roost Monitoring Scheme**

More recently, in 2007, the Brown Long-eared Bat Roost Monitoring Scheme was piloted and established. This project concentrates on counts of brown long-eared bats at their roosts and is conducted by individuals with a greater level of experience in bat identification than is necessary for the waterway surveys or car-based surveys.



# CONSERVATION

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The roost survey protocol involves at least two counts per annum (mid-May to August) using three potential survey methods depending on the structure, access and location of bats within, and emerging from, the roost.

## **Summary of Brown Long-eared Roost Monitoring 2020**

For Brown Long-eared Roost Monitoring, 51 volunteers participated in 2020, which included three roost owners. Volunteers provided count data for 28 roost sites while an additional 3 roosts were surveyed by volunteer teams assisting the scheme Co-ordinator. In total, 114 monitoring surveys were carried at 45 roosts. Using the highest results for each roost monitored in 2020, the total number of brown long-eared bats counted was 1,854 individuals, the highest number of individual counted since the scheme started. Results from a GAM model indicates that there was an increase from 2008 followed by a fluctuating trend above the baseline until 2016 and 2017. While the index is currently above the baseline value for 2008, there is a slight downward trend for 2018 and 2019. But improved count numbers in 2020 means that the curve is moving slightly upwards. Overall the population is considered to be stable.

## **Lesser Horseshoe Bat Monitoring Programme**

In 2013 Bat Conservation Ireland won a contract with NPWS to manage and administer the Lesser Horseshoe Bat Monitoring database (managed by Dr. Niamh Roche). This involves liaising with local National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT) staff who conduct counts at lesser horseshoe bat sites in the west of Ireland in summer and in winter. Bat Conservation Ireland gathers the data, ensures it is entered into the database and carries out trend and other analysis on it.

## **Summary of Lesser Horseshoe Bat Monitoring 2020**

NPWS and VWT regional staff forwarded count data from 110 lesser horseshoe bat sites in winter 2020 and 145 sites in summer 2020. In winter 2020 over 9,300 bats were counted and over 11,000 bats were counted in summer 2020. From 2012 onwards there has been excellent consistency in counts at lesser horseshoe sites which increases the robustness of the monitoring dataset. Trends for this species have steeper increases in



# CONSERVATION

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winter averaging 4.9% per annum since 1987, although the sample size in the early years of the survey was very small. Summer trends mirror this, albeit less steeply (2.3% per annum since 1992). Investigations into the use of covariates in the lesser horseshoe bat trend models showed that more accurate trends for winter are produced when day number (grouped) is included as a covariate in the model. Summer trends modelled with day number and internal counts (as opposed to emergence counts) also result in more accurate trends with narrow confidence intervals.

## BATLAS

BATLAS 2020 is an Ireland-wide bat survey distribution survey primarily funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service with additional grants from several local authorities and district councils in the Republic Of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

It follows on from the BATLAS 2010 project which was completed in 2008 and 2009 and was the first distribution survey of its kind for bats in Ireland. It focused on the population distribution of four target species: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat and Leisler's bat and used a team of skilled 'citizen science' volunteers who surveyed 2 to 3 suitable sites within each 10 x 10 km survey square, recording the presence or absence of the target bat species along with a suite of environmental variables.

Methods for BATLAS 2020 were broadly similar to its predecessor, with the most significant change being that BATLAS 2020 incorporated more intensive levels of surveying, where possible, at a finer scale of resolution.

Over the period 37 training courses for BATLAS 2020 were delivered throughout the island of Ireland. Two hundred and thirty seven people registered their interest in participating and 121 volunteers actively surveyed and submitted data. This represented a 95% increase in volunteer participation from BATLAS 2010. Coverage also increased for the BATLAS 2020 survey from 751 to 778 10km<sup>2</sup> squares (representing 77% of the island). A total of 3,373 survey sites were also surveyed for BATLAS 2020 which was almost double the number of sites surveyed for BATLAS 2010.



# CONSERVATION

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Detection rates across target species followed a similar order to those for the BATLAS 2010 study with soprano pipistrelle being the most commonly detected, followed by common pipistrelle, Leisler's bat and Daubenton's bat. However higher detection levels were recorded during BATLAS 2020 of all species at both the 10km square and the individual site level:- at site level soprano pipistrelle increased from 63.7% to 68.0%; common pipistrelle from 40.7% to 53.9%; Leisler's bat from 32.1% to 36.1% and Daubenton's bat from 29.8% to 30.74%.

Environmental data was collected across all 3,373 survey sites providing a large data set. This provides the basis for statistical analyses exploring the comparative influence of the geographic and environmental parameters on the presence of the target bat species.

BATLAS was a huge undertaking for a small organisation such as Bat Conservation Ireland and covered the years 2016 to 2018, with some mop-up surveys carried out in 2019 and final reports to County Councils in 2020.



BATLAS 2020 volunteers from Limerick Bat Group

# COLLABORATION

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## Working with Other Groups

Bat Conservation Ireland has long-standing working relationships and collaborations with key groups working across the environmental sector.

### Irish Environmental Pillar

Bat Conservation Ireland has been a long-standing member of the Irish Environmental Network (IEN) and has dedicated representative on the Environmental Pillar. For many years, this representative has been Donna Mullen, a former Council Member of Bat Conservation Ireland and someone with vast experience in environmental issues.



Environmental Pillar Delegation to Brussels 2019

In 2020, we were sorry to lose Donna, after many years of valued contribution, provided on a voluntary basis. Niamh Roche replaced Donna in November 2020, as Bat Conservation Ireland representative on the Environmental Pillar.

In 2020, the following work was carried out in this capacity:

- Attended IEN Pillar Steering Committee Meetings and AGM
- Attended the Environmental Law Conference
- Voted on behalf of BC Ireland
- Made a submission to the European Commission on Sustainable Finance

### Bat Life Europe

Bat Conservation Ireland is also a member of Bat Life Europe, an international non-governmental conservation organisation, built from a partnership of national bat conservation organisations that are committed to promoting the conservation of all bat species and their habitats throughout Europe. Bat Conservation Ireland has a nominated Trustee to represent Irish interests in this capacity. Donna Mullen had been



# COLLABORATION

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a Trustee for Bat Life Europe since 2017, but stepped down in 2020 and handed the mantle over to our Chairperson Brian Keeley, who attended virtual meetings on behalf of Bat Conservation Ireland.

## **Additional Collaborations in 2020:**

- We provided assistance with queries on lesser horseshoe bat roost distributions in Limerick, which are roosts managed by Vincent Wildlife Trust, Ireland and also had various bat conservation discussions with with them.
- We submitted a statement to support Friends of Mayo Dark Skies initiative to develop a wildlife-friendly lighting plan for Newport Co. Mayo.
- We entered in to discussions with Bat Conservation Trust, UK. on pilot woodland bat monitoring and a possible cooperative study with data provided to BCT from Daubenton's and Car Monitoring in Northern Ireland.
- We provided bat trend data to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), UK for their Northern Ireland State of Nature Report.
- We participated in Teagasc's Hedgerow Week online programme, including providing information for their website and doing a piece to camera on the importance of hedgerows for bat populations.

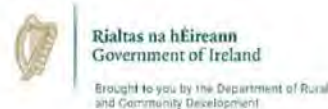


Tina Aughney explaining the importance of hedgerows

# COLLABORATION

We have long-term collaborations with the following organisations:

- An Taisce
- Bat Conservation Trust UK
- CEDaR, NI
- Environmental Pillar, IEN
- EUROBATS
- The Heritage Council
- Local Men's Sheds
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC)
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
- Northern Ireland Bat Group
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Teagasc
- The Bat Lab, UCD
- Tidy Towns Groups





# RESEARCH

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## Nathusius Pipistrelle Research Group

In 2020 the activities of the All Ireland Nathusius Pipistrelle Bat Project were curtailed by the pandemic and the restrictions on both travel and specific types of bat research activities.

Members of the Project team investigated a site known for this target species in Co. Wexford and a small number of Nathusius Pipistrelle bats were caught and fitted with rings (under licence) to enable identification on recapture in subsequent sessions.

The Project team has also investigated the use of passive acoustic monitoring techniques to collect more data on this elusive species in 2021 and continue to liaise with colleagues in continental Europe on learning more about Nathusius's Pipistrelle bats.



Trapping with the Nathusius Pipistrelle Bat Ireland Group in Co. Cavan 2019.

# RESEARCH

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## Research Collaboration with QUB

In 2020, Bat Conservation Ireland collaborated with Queen's University Belfast and the Irish Centre for High-End Computing, on a research project commissioned by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), '*An assessment of climate change impacts on Natterjack toad and bat populations*'. This project analyzed three forms of data by which "populations" might be associated with 'weather/climate' data, as follows:

- Impact of projected climate change on species ranges;
- Impact of local weather (using Met Éireann data) on species activity; and
- Impact of (empirically observed past) climate (Northern Atlantic Oscillation) on population estimates.

Additionally, a PDF Guidance Document (instruction manual) was produced setting out, step-by step (using a screenshot approach) how to construct Maxent Species Distribution Models to serve as a template for the assessment of climate change on other Irish species.

A research paper titled 'Testing consistency of modelled predictions of the impact of climate change on bats' and co-authored by Niamh Roche and Tina Aughney was also submitted to the Journal of Climate Change and Ecology for review in November 2020.





# RESEARCH

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## Research Collaboration with UCD

Bat Conservation Ireland has been working in collaboration with the Bat Lab in UCD, since 2019. Together with Prof. Emma Teeling, Dr. Niamh Roche has been working in partnership to develop the framework for an Ecosystems Services Research project to determine the role that bats play in Ecosystems Services, or in other words what insects they are consuming and how does this help, not only in our ecosystem in terms of maintaining a healthy and diverse environment, but also the service it provides to food production, for example as an alternative to pesticide crop-control. A proposal for this project was submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2019 and was approved in theory. Unfortunately due to funding cuts in 2020, the project was not able to proceed on this basis.

In December 2020, this project was submitted under 'The Environment Fund 2020 - Biodiversity' to the Community Foundation for Ireland, who agreed to fund two thirds of this project.

In 2021, this will allow us to carry out 2 important stages of this project as follows:

1. To develop and publish a much-needed, comprehensive identification guide to Irish bats, with the assistance and expertise of the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC); and
2. Develop a website and recruit volunteers to collect bat dropping samples to send to UCD in a citizen-science project. By tapping into Bat Conservation Ireland's existing volunteer network we will be in a position to ensure widespread collection of samples from multiple bat species across Ireland. The samples will then be analysed in UCD to confirm bat identification in the first instance. DNA metabarcoding will be used to survey bat droppings, a novel way to efficiently, cheaply and non-invasively, estimate the presence and biodiversity of Irish arthropod species.



# RESEARCH

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## COST Action Network: Climbats

Climbats is an EU Action Network funded by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) which aims to bring together bat researchers, academics, NGOs and others to examine how climate change affects bat distribution in Europe and how this is likely to impact on the ecosystem services that they provide. Climbats is made up of 3 different working groups, with each group having a main objective as follows:



1. Define, predict and quantify the effects of climate change on bats across Europe (Working Group 1);
2. Establish strategies to develop a network to monitor and predict changes in bat distribution and inform future management and policy (Working Group 2);
3. Evaluate the effects of climate change on insect consumption provided by bats in farmland (Working Group 3).

Bat Conservation is represented on this network by Niamh Roche who joined the Management Committee in 2020. Prior to this Niamh was Vice-Chair of Working Group 2 on Bat Monitoring, having a wealth of experience in running 2 All-Ireland bat monitoring programmes over 18 and 8 years respectively. As part of the action, Bat Conservation Ireland has already contributed over 40,000 Irish bat records and these data, along with thousands of other bat records from across Europe, will enable modelling of bat occurrence and climate.

In 2020, prior to the outbreak of Covid 19 in Europe, Niamh attended meetings of the Management Committee and Working Group 2, of which she is an active member. In May 2020, she attended an online meeting of the COST Network Management Committee and in December she attended an online meeting of Working Group 2.



# RESEARCH

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## Research Papers Published

Bat Conservation Ireland's two Project Managers Niamh Roche and Tina Aughney contributed to two research papers in 2020, as follows:

### **Paper submitted for peer review on 22-11-2020**

**Journal:** Climate Change Ecology

**Title:** *'Testing consistency of modelled predictions of the impact of climate change on bats'*

**Corresponding Author:** Dr. Natasha E McGowan

**Co-Authors:** Niamh Roche; Tina Aughney; Jason Flanagan; Paul Nolan; Ferdia Marnell; Neil Reid

Manuscript Number: ECOCHG-D-20-00008

### **Paper published in Spring 2020**

**Journal:** Acta Chiropterologica

**Title:** *'Elucidating the consequences of a warming climate for common bat species in north-western Europe'*

**Authors:** Niamh Roche, Steve Langton, Tina Aughney, Deirdre Lynn, and Ferdia Marnell  
21(2): 359-373, 2019; doi: 10.3161/15081109ACC2019.21.2.011



# FUTURE PLANS

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Bat Conservation Ireland's plans for 2021 and beyond are as follows:

## **Organisational Structure**

- 2020, saw the end of our current Strategic Plan period (2017-2020) and we will engage in strategic planning, with a view to developing a new strategic plan in 2021;
- In 2021, Bat Conservation Ireland will have to formally report to the Charities Regulator on our progress with implementing the Governance Code. We will continue working on ensuring compliance and ongoing governance work;
- In 2020, Bat Conservation Ireland went through a process of formally affiliating the county bat groups within the overall organisation. Going forward we will continue to liaise with the Bat Groups, ensure compliant reporting of activities and finance and support the work that they do by providing good governance structures;

## **Conservation Work**

- See through our current tender for the Irish Bat Monitoring Programme (2018-2022);
- In December 2020, the Community Foundation for Ireland confirmed that we had been successful in securing funding for an Ecosystems Services Project, which will be brought to fruition in 2021;
- It is the intention that Bat Conservation Ireland use reserve monies to reintroduce our small grants scheme to support the work of small community-led conservation work around the country;

## **Education**

- Bat Conservation Ireland will continue it's work of educating the general public about the importance of bats for a healthy environment in the following ways:
  - Continue to deal with queries submitted through our website;
  - By maintaining and updating our 2 websites - [www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org) and [www.learnaboutbats.org](http://www.learnaboutbats.org);
  - Conduct bat walks and talks, centrally through Bat Conservation Ireland staff and through the county bat groups around the country;



# FUTURE PLANS

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- Carry out training (either in person or online) for members, the general public, ecologists, NPWS staff, students, bat rehabbers and anyone with an interest in learning more about bats, or in upskilling people in specific areas;
- Carry out educational activities during Biodiversity Week and Heritage Week for the general public;
- Maintain and update our social media platforms, to help engage and educate the general public about bats;

## **Community Engagement**

- Provide support for bat groups for their work in running bat walks and talks and educational events and conservation projects in their local communities;
- Engage with Tidy Towns on projects such as our bat box scheme, to ensure there is wide coverage of these conservation projects;

## **Collaboration**

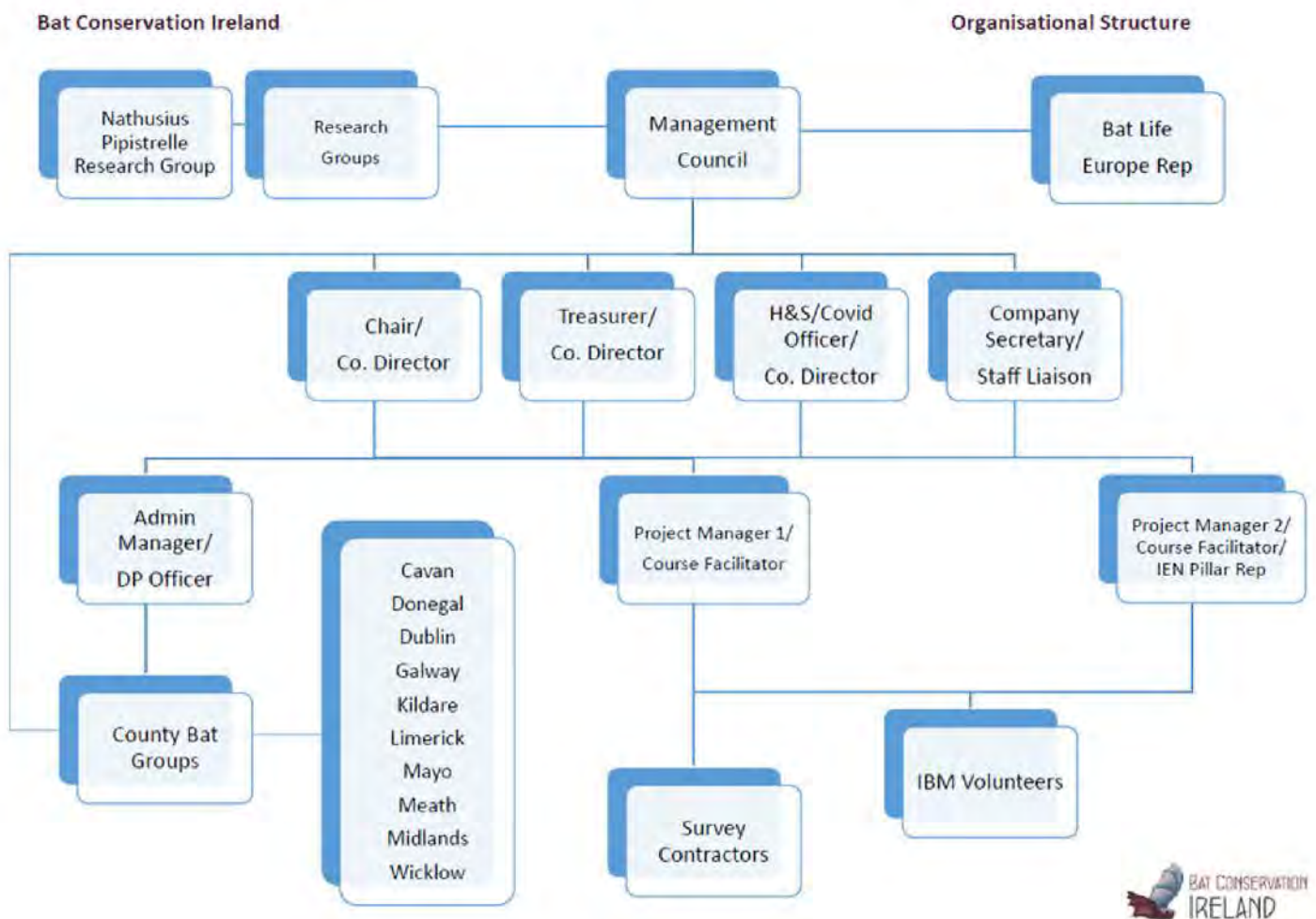
- Continue engaging with the Environmental Pillar, to ensure that bat issues are well represented at national level;
- Appoint a representative to Bat Life Europe to ensure that issues around Irish bats are well represented at European Level;
- Continue working with national environmental organisations around the country to ensure that bat issues receive good exposure;

## **Data Research**

- Complete work carried out on our data base housing bat records to ensure it is robust and future-proofed;
- Liaise with NBDC around housing of bat records and feed data into their database repositories;
- Continue participating in research collaborations such as COST Action Network: Climbats and UCD on the Ecosystems Services Project;
- Continue with research and contributing too research publications.

# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Bat Conservation Ireland is a non-governmental organisation with charitable status. We are a membership organisation, with a governing Council (currently comprised of 7 Council members) and a small, paid part-time staff. We have 10 bat groups at various stages of development, around the country. Our current organisational structure is laid out in the matrix below.





# STAFF

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Bat Conservation Ireland currently has 3 paid part-time staff members.

## Tina Aughney

Tina has managed the All-Ireland Daubenton's Waterways Survey since 2006 and the Brown Long-eared Bat Monitoring Scheme since 2007. She works for Bat Conservation Ireland on a part time basis.

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Under Tina's management, the All-Ireland Daubenton's Waterways Survey has developed into a monitoring scheme with a large and committed volunteer base. By liaising on a county level with local authorities and community groups, promoting the project with local press and radio stations, and presenting training courses throughout the island, Tina has trained in excess of 2,000 volunteers since 2006. This scheme continues to thrive with over 400 waterway sites surveyed across the island providing extensive information on the distribution of this species.

Tina has an honours degree in Environmental Science from NUI Galway and completed a Ph.D. thesis on the impact of the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS) on lowland farm habitats in the west of Ireland. For her extensive work in relation to bats and facilitating members of the public to become actively involved in the conservation of Irish bat species, Tina was awarded Distinguished Recorder of the Year 2011 by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

She is an active active collector of biodiversity data that is regularly submitted to National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC).

# STAFF

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## Dawn Quinn

Dawn joined Bat Conversation Ireland in 2019 as its part-time Administration Manager. She has over 20 years' administrative and financial experience, working in both the private and NGO sectors.

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Dawn has worked in variety of different roles including managing and implementing administrative systems, volunteer management, project and network coordination and event management in the human rights, social justice and international development sectors.

She holds an honours degree in Audio Visual Communications from the Institute of Technology Tallaght and a Master's Degree in Comparative Ethnic Conflict from Queen's University Belfast



# STAFF

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## Niamh Roche

Niamh has managed the Car-based Bat Monitoring Scheme since 2004 and the Lesser Horseshoe Bat Roost Monitoring Scheme since 2012. She works for Bat Conservation Ireland on a part time basis.

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Under her direction, the car-based scheme has grown from a pilot project covering fewer than 10 survey squares, to an island-wide survey with a committed surveyor base. She has also presented Bat Conservation Ireland's work at national and international conferences. She was lead author of the book *Irish Bats in the 21st Century*. Niamh has also been the main organiser of several national bat conferences. More recently Niamh has been involved in analysing long-term bat trend datasets collected by Bat Conservation Ireland monitoring schemes to see if predictions can be made about how they are likely to change with future climate change.

Niamh represents Bat Conservation Ireland on the Management Committee of the EU Cost Network Project on Bats and Climate Change. Niamh also represents Bat Conservation Ireland on the Environmental Pillar.

She has a degree in Environmental Biology from UCD and a Ph.D. from the University of Warwick, which examined bat activity in broadleaved woodlands

# VOLUNTEERS

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In any given year, Bat Conservation Ireland could have 600 volunteers helping us achieve our goal of 'the advancement of education and the promotion of the conservation and study of bats on the island of Ireland and elsewhere in the world'.

Our volunteers are critical to our work and we could not achieve our goals without them.

Volunteers work across key areas as follows:

- Education - conducting bat walks and talks around the country
- Bat Monitoring - carrying out bat surveys for the Car-based Monitoring Scheme, the All Ireland Daubenton's Waterways Survey and the Brown Long-Eared Bat Roost Monitoring
- Community Engagement - Liaising with other Community groups such as Tidy Towns and Men's Shed for our Bat Box scheme



A variety of photos of volunteers and members attending training and educational events taken from previous years



# MEMBERSHIP

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Bat Conservation Ireland is a membership organisation that greatly values its members and volunteers, both of whom are vital to the work of conserving Ireland's bat populations. Many of our members participate in activities such as our national monitoring programmes, which are carried out annually.

We would like to sincerely thank all of our members and volunteers for their kind and generous support in 2020.

Volunteers with Bat Conservation Ireland play a key role in supporting the work of the bat monitoring projects carried out annually. In 2020, there were 226 paid members of Bat Conservation Ireland. As we are very active around the country in any given year, carrying out bat walks and talks, participating in events and educational activities, this helps with encouraging new members to join. Unfortunately much of this work was curtailed in 2020 due to Covid 19 restrictions and as a result we saw a drop off in membership numbers.

In order to ensure that membership fees are processed in an efficient manner and decrease staff dealing with cash and cheque payments, we have an online recurring membership payments system which allows annual membership fees to be automatically renewed, thereby decreasing the amount of administrative time spent on following up on payments.

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**Bat Conservation Ireland  
would like to thank all of our  
members and volunteers for  
their invaluable support.**

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# Financial Summary

## Income

Irish Bat Monitoring Programme (NPWS)	€75,000
Northern Ireland Environmental Agency (Natural Environmental Division)	€9,619
Core Funding (IEN)	€13,812
Membership and Donations	€4,907
Sales of Merchandise and Training Courses	€8,533
Once-off Projects	€1,210
Bat Group Projects	€955
Other Funding (IEN)	€1,403
Research Funding (Queens University)	€2,200
Project Money Deferred	(€24,527)
	<b>€93,112</b>

## Expenditure

Irish Bat Monitoring Programme	€11,156
Once-off Projects	€1,080
Bat Group Projects	€1,243
BATLAS 2020	€2,308
Biodiversity Week 2020	€40

### Core Costs

Wages and Salaries	€54,982
Social Welfare Costs	€5,113
Staff Training	€100
Management Expenses	€537
Insurance	€4,227
Printing, Postage & Stationery	€597
Computer Costs	€3,123
Motor Expenses	€197
Legal & Professional	€1,141
Bank Charges	€374
Doubtful Debts	€563
General Expenses	€1,081
Subscriptions	€120
Merchandise	€32
Auditor's Remuneration	€4,967
Depreciation	€131

**€93,112**

*2020 Annual Report and Financial Statements were properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland"*

**Our full Financial Statements and audited accounts are available on our website**



# IN 2020

## **National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**

**Purpose:** Irish Bat Monitoring Programme

**Contract Term:** 4 years (2018-2022)

**Total Value of Contract:** €323,000

## **National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**

**Purpose:** To upgrade the existing bat records database

**Grant Term:** 2020

**Total Value of Contract:** €4,920

## **National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**

**Purpose:** BATLAS 2020

**Grant Term:** 3 years (2016-2019 C/F in 2020)

**Total Value of Contract:** €75,000

## **Northern Ireland Environmental Agency (Natural Environmental Division) Bat Monitoring in Northern Ireland (Irish Bat Monitoring Programme)**

**Purpose:** National Bat Distribution Project

**Grant Term:** 2019-2020

**Total Value of Contract:** €9,619

## **Irish Environmental Network - IEN, on behalf of Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment**

**Purpose:** Core Funding

**Grant Term:** 2020-2021

**Total Value of Contract:** €13,812



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



Northern Ireland  
Environment  
Agency



Department of  
Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

IEN



Irish  
Environmental  
Network

**Bat Conservation  
Ireland would like to  
thank our partners and  
funders for their  
financial assistance**



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Registered Number: 494343  
Charity Number: 13016  
Charity Registration Number: 20039417

