

# BAT CONSERVATION IRELAND

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ANNUAL REPORT  
2024



**20**<sup>th</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
BAT CONSERVATION  
IRELAND

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

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# 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

Bat Conservation Ireland is managed by a Governing Council, who oversee the day-to-day running of the organisation. Council for 2024 were:

<b>Co Chair:</b> John Curtin	Emma Boston
<b>Co Chair:</b> Caroline Shiel	Anna Collins
<b>Treasurer:</b> Chris Peppiatt	Jason Guile (Co-Opted)
<b>Company Secretary:</b> Brian Keeley	Ruth Hanniffy
Eimear Barrett (Co-Opted)	Ronan O'Connor (Co-Opted)

<b>Charity No:</b> 13016	<b>Charity Registered No:</b> 20039417
<b>Tax Reference No:</b> 9781345A	<b>Tax Clearance No:</b> 515771
<b>Company No:</b> 494343	
<b>Registered Office:</b> Carmichael Centre, 4-7, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7, D07 RHA8	
<b>Auditors &amp; Company Law Advisors:</b> O'Dwyer Delaney, Auditors & Accountants, 33, Fitzwilliam Street Upper, Dublin D02 TF82.	
<b>Bankers:</b> Bank of Ireland, Ashbourne, Co. Meath.	

We are members of the following organisations:

- Irish Environmental Network
- The Wheel
- Affiliated with: Bat Life Europe

*Bat Conservation Ireland has adopted and implemented the Charities Governance Code issued by the Charities Regulator. It reported on its compliance with the code formally as required by the regulator in October 2024.*



John Curtin



Caroline Shiel



Chris Peppiatt



Brian Keeley



Eimear Barrett



Emma Boston



Jason Guile



Ruth Hanniffy



Ronan O'Connor

# SNAPSHOT OF 2024

## CONSERVATION

- 5 Monitoring Schemes
- 553 Volunteers
- 995 Surveys completed

- 554 Queries Answered
- 187,929 website page views

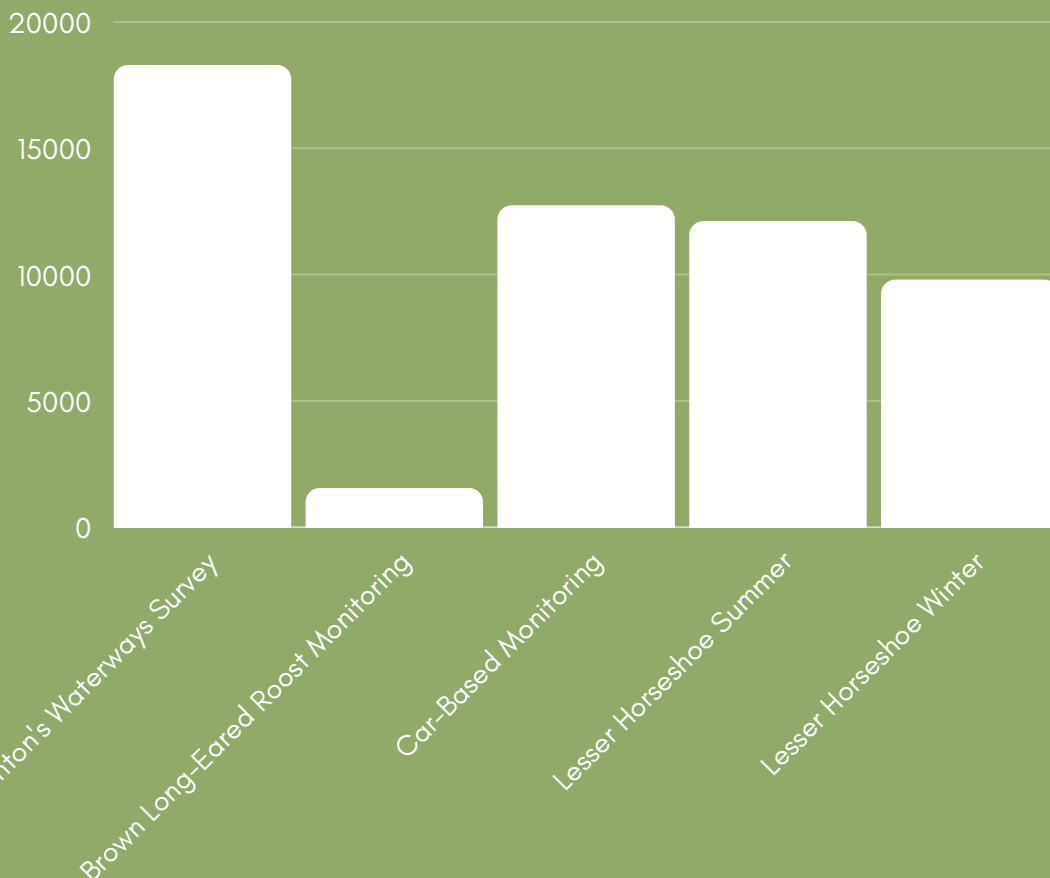
## EDUCATION

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 11 active bat groups;
- 17,782 followers on social media

- Holds over 100,000 bat records
- Research collaborations with UCD, ATU, University of Ulster
- Member of EU COST Action Network: CLIMBATS

## RESEARCH & DATA



**FIGURE 1.**

Number of bat passes or individual bats counted by each scheme of the Irish Bat Monitoring Programme in 2024

# Main Objectives pursued and achieved during 2024

education

conservation

community engagement

research

collaboration

# EDUCATION

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Ireland is currently 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 conflicts 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 4 websites:
  - Bat Conservation Ireland - [www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org)
  - Learn About Bats - [www.learnaboutbats.com](http://www.learnaboutbats.com)
  - Bats and Bugs - [www.batsandbugs.ie](http://www.batsandbugs.ie)
  - Online Training Platform - <https://training.batconservationireland.org/>
- Organising bat walks and talks for the general public across the country;
- Conducting and participating in seminars and workshops to facilitate additional learning for our members and the wider public;
- Issuing a bi-annual Newsletter to update our members on our work;
- Hosting our triennial bat conference to bring together bat experts and share latest research and data;



## 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 2024 staff dealt with approximately 554 queries; 486 by e-mail through our website and 68 through our Social Media pages.

Bat Conservation Ireland, sees this service as essential for 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 information about the organisation and what we do, as well as 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: 171,000

First Time Visitors: 44,000

Bat Sightings Submitted: 164



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 Bat Conservation Ireland logo, which features a stylized bat silhouette and the text "BAT CONSERVATION IRELAND". To the right of the logo are three circular buttons labeled "JOIN", "DONATE", and "SHOP". Further right, a shopping cart icon indicates "0 ITEMS - €0.00".

Below the logo and buttons is a dark red navigation bar with the following menu items: "OUR WORK", "IRISH BATS", "ADVICE", "GET INVOLVED", "EVENTS & TRAINING", "BAT GROUPS", "ABOUT", and "SEARCH".

The main content area features a large image of a bat in flight. Overlaid on the image is the text: "BAT CONSERVATION IRELAND - IRELAND'S LEADING AUTHORITY ON BATS". Below this, a paragraph states: "Bat Conservation Ireland works to protect and expand existing bat populations and to develop a widespread understanding and appreciation of bats amongst the public, state agencies and other organisations."

At the bottom of the main content area, there are two buttons: "Become a member" and "Get involved", both with checkmark icons.

Below the main content area, there are three columns of text, each with a checkmark icon:

- Help protect Ireland's bat populations by supporting our work
- Learn more about bats and Ireland's bat populations
- Specialised education and training to help protect Ireland's bats



**Learn About Bats**  
with Bat Conservation Ireland



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 2023, for Learn About Bats are as follows:



Page Views: 16,929  
First Time Visitors: 8,100



## Online Presence - Social Media

Bat Conservation Ireland's engaged on 4 social media platforms in 2024 - Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X (formerly Twitter). Facebook and Instagram provide us with the opportunity to engage more on a community level, with members, supporters and across our 11 bat groups. In 2024, we created a LinkedIn Account to connect on a more professional level with the science-based community and share more of our research projects, data and papers. We ran 3 very successful social media campaigns over the course of the year, to help increase knowledge of bats:

- 'Gardening for Bats' as part of our community engagement for Biodiversity Week
- 'Bats and Castles' as part of our community engagement for Heritage Week
- '31 days of Bats' over the month of October, to coincide with Hallowe'en

In 2024, our social media following over the course of the year increased on both Facebook and Instagram by 1,115. By the end of 2024, we had 12,077 Facebook followers, 1,802 Instagram followers and our LinkedIn followers grew to 903. X (formerly Twitter) followers remained unchanged at almost 3,000 followers.

Our reach through both channels has been very successful, as these stats show:

- Facebook - 121,100
- Instagram - 23,700

facebook

Email or phone

Password

Log In

Forgot Account?



**Bat Conservation Ireland**

10K likes · 12K followers

Posts About Reels Photos Videos

## Events

2024 was a significant milestone for Bat Conservation Ireland, as it was our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, having been founded in 2004. Our biggest highlight, was the Inaugural 'Bat Ball' in November, which closed out the year for our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events and was a key marker in celebrating all of the work that had been achieved over 20 years. We presented the Aoibheann Gaughran Award at the bat ball, which had been launched on International Bat Night in August 2024 and were delighted to honour the memory of such a dedicated and well loved conservationist and volunteer, through this award.

We were delighted to be able to get our bat panel up and running and trained up 51 individuals, who could deliver bat-related events throughout the country. This has enabled us to substantially increase our educational capacity, ensuring that we are reaching all parts of the country to help educate the public about our wonderful Irish bats.

There was a great appetite for Bat Conservation Ireland members, bat groups, volunteers and the wider public to get out into nature and engage with many activities run around the country to learn more about bats and promote their protection and conservation.



## Events

Key Events for Bat Conservation Ireland carried out in 2024 were:

- 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Swarming Event for Bat Conservation Ireland Members
- Launch and presentation of the Aoibheann Gaughran Inaugural Award
- The Inaugural Bat Ball to celebrate 20 years of Bat Conservation Ireland
- Attendance and presenting at the European Bat Research Symposium in Tarragona, Spain
- Attendance at 'NatureFest' at Airfield Estate, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
- Attendance and presenting at the All Ireland Mammal Symposium in Galway
- Attendance at GLAS, Gardening and Landscape Exhibition to promote our Gardening for Bat's Project
- Launch of the 'Have a Natterer' webinar series to mark 20 years of Bat Conservation Ireland
- Participating in the Rediscovery Centre's 'Lets Talk Science Festival', which reached approx. 35,000 students;
- Delivery of a bat talk at the Climate Ambassador's Programme lunchtime webinar series



## Biodiversity Week 2024

Biodiversity Week is a key week in the calendar for Bat Conservation Ireland and 2024 we hosted a number of bat walks and talks at various locations around the country. It was great to get out and about meeting lots of different people and to share our knowledge and passion for these wonderful mammals. Our activities during the week were as follows:



- Batty Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, delivered By Donegal Bat Group
- Ramparts Canal and River Boyne Bat Walk, delivered by Bat Conservation Ireland
- Bat Safari at Swan Park, Buncrana, Co. Donegal, delivered By Donegal Bat Group
- Bat Walk & Talk on 'The Secret life of Bats' in the stunning St. Colmcille's Church Grounds, Rathmore, Co. Kildare
- Bat Walk and Talk at Rossmore Park, Co Monaghan, delivered by Bat Conservation Ireland
- Bat Walk and Talk at Merlin Woods, Galway, delivered by Galway Bat Group
- Nocturnal Bat Walk at Belvedere Gardens, Co. Westmeath, delivered by Midland Bat Group
- Bat Walk and Talk at Westport Library, Co Mayo, delivered by Mayo Bat Group in partnership with Dark Sky Ireland and Leave No Trace
- 'Gardening for Bats' Webinar, delivered by Bat Conservation Ireland
- Bat walk and talk as part of 'Bats on campus' project, UCG, delivered by Galway Bat Group
- Discover the Night at Inch Island Wildfowl Reserve, Donegal, delivered by Donegal Bat Group
- Bat walk and Talk with Spiddal Tidy Towns, Spiddal, delivered by Galway Bat Group

## Biodiversity Week 2024

- JFK Arboretum Bat Walk, New Ross, delivered by Wexford Bat Group
- Bat Walk and Talk at Dún Na Sí, Moate, Co. Westmeath, delivered by Midland Bat Group
- Bunclody Library Bat Talk, Newtownbarry, delivered by Wexford Bat Group
- Moonlit Bat Safari at Ards Forest Park, Donegal, delivered by Donegal Bat Group
- Bat walk and talk, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, delivered by Kildare Bat Group



*All in all, we had a hugely successful Biodiversity Week 2024! However, as always, we couldn't carry out the amount of bat walks, talks and educational events without our fantastic bat groups, who every year provide excellent educational opportunities for the public to learn more about bats, their habitats and why they are so important for biodiversity. We would like to say a huge thank you to our Bat Groups who carry out all this work voluntarily and so passionately.*



# EDUCATION

To coincide with the launch of our 'Gardening for Bats' project in 2024, we ran a social media campaign across our different platforms on tips to attract bats to your garden and make it more bat friendly. These posts ran throughout the week and had great engagement, as the stats indicate below.



Stats for engagement of these posts are as follows:

Post	Reach	Engagement	Shares
Gardening for Bats Campaign	28,530	1,052	178

*A big thank you to the Irish Environmental Network who provide year-on-year funding for events carried out in Biodiversity Week. We very much appreciate the support and funding of these activities, which allows the bat groups to cast the net wider in terms of education, community reach and recruitment of volunteers.*

## Heritage Week 2024

In Heritage Week, our bat groups, staff and volunteers were out and about carrying out a number of educational activities as follows:

- Explore Killyon Manor Grounds After Dark with Anna Collins of Kildare Bat Group
- 'Bats About Newbridge at Sunset: Liffey Linear Park, Newbridge' with Kildare Bat Group and Newbridge Tidy Towns
- Donegal Bat Safari, along the River Bank Walk, Donegal Town, with Donegal Bat Group
- Go batty with Tullahought Tidy Towns, a talk and walk delivered by Wexford Bat Group
- Bat Walk and Talk at Newcastle Woods, Co. Longford, delivered by Bat Conservation Ireland
- 'Introduction to Bats' webinar, as part of the Climate Ambassadors Programme, delivered by Bat Conservation Ireland
- Bat Talk and Walk at Syngesfield Demense, Birr with Anna Collins of Kildare Bat Group and Biodiversity Officer, Offaly County Council
- Bat Walk at St. Helen's Park, Dundalk, Co. Louth with Anna Collins of Kildare Bat Group and the Louth County Council Biodiversity Officer Programme
- Bat Walk in Balrath Woods, Co. Meath, with Bat Conservation Ireland and Meath County Council Biodiversity Officer Programme
- Guided Bat Walk at St. Glannan's Cathedral, and Graveyard, Killaloe, Co. Clare with Anna Collins of Kildare Bat Group and Killaloe Tidy Towns



National  
Heritage Week

A Heritage Council programme

## Scaling Up our Educational Capacity

Historically, as a small organisation, we have had limited capacity to provide the resources for educational activities and have for a number of years wanted to scale up our educational offerings to meet requests. In 2024, we applied to the Heritage Council's Organisational Support Grant for funding to do this. As a result, our Projects Coordinator, set about training a panel of educators who would be able to deliver bat walks, talks and other educational activities. At our annual conference in 2023, we asked attendees to express their interest in participating in training and being part of a trained panel who would be available to carry out bat walks, talks or other events in different parts of the country, enabling us to fulfil requests as they came in.

We received a lot of interest and in 2024 our Projects Coordinator trained 51 people to the standard of being able to deliver a bat walk/talk. Many of these people already had extensive interest in/experience of bats or carry out walks. Some initially assisted at walks carried out by bat groups or staff members to build up their skill set in order to be able to deliver walks and talks themselves.

As a result of this in 2024, bat panel members delivered 40 events nationwide.



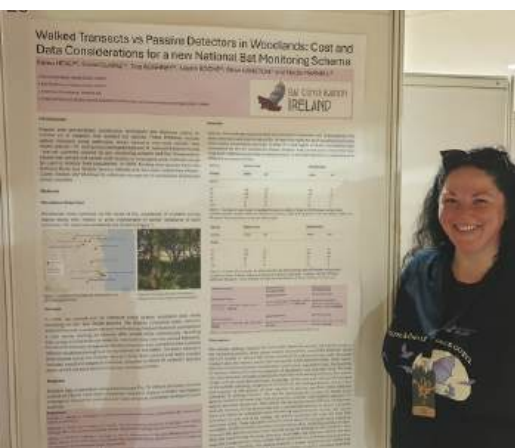
Bat Panel Members at Training Workshop, April 2024

## European Bat Research Symposium (EBRS)

In September 2024, Niamh Roche and Karen Healy attended the European Bat Research Symposium in Tarragona, Spain. They were joined there by the Bat Conservation Ireland Co-Chair John Curtain and Council Member Brian Keely, who attended in their own capacity.

The symposium, which is held every three years, is dedicated to the study and conservation of bats in Europe. Researchers, conservationists, and enthusiasts from around the world, gather to exchange knowledge and discuss recent advancements in bat science and conservation efforts. It's a great opportunity for Bat Conservation Ireland to share the research findings of our monitoring programmes and research findings on our Irish bats, with a European audience. The symposium typically covers a wide range of topics, including bat ecology, behaviour, physiology, genetics, and habitat conservation. It serves as a platform for presenting research findings, fostering collaboration, and sharing best practice in bat conservation between European colleagues.

Niamh Roche delivered a presentation on the *'Bats and Bugs: a citizen-based approach to investigate the diet of bats and their ecosystem services in Ireland'*. Karen Healy presented a poster on woodland monitoring.



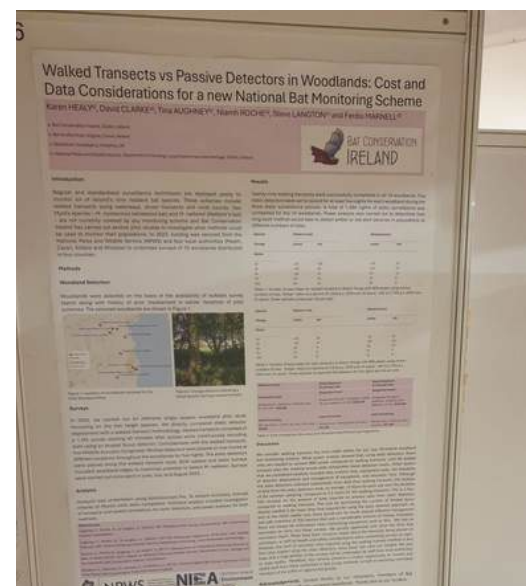
# EDUCATION

## All Ireland Mammal Symposium (AIMS)

In October 2024, Niamh Roche and Karen Healy attended the 5th All Ireland Mammal Symposium in Atlantic Technological University (ATU) in Galway. They were joined there by colleagues, friends and enthusiasts in conservation, research and industry. The event serves to bring academic and industry professionals working with mammals together, to showcase cutting-edge research and developing knowledge.

Bat Conservation Ireland were facilitated with an information stand for the duration of the symposium, to provide information on our work to interested parties and to network with colleagues and conservationists on common areas of interest. It also gave us the opportunity to link in with potential guest speakers for our 'Have a Natterer' webinar series.

Niamh Roche delivered a presentation on *'Bats and Bugs: a citizen-based approach to investigate the diet of bats and their ecosystem services in Ireland'*. Karen Healy presented a poster on woodland monitoring.



## Swarming Event for Bat Conservation Ireland Members

To celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and to acknowledge and thank all of our members for their support over 20 years, we held a members-only bat swarming event in September 2024 in Dunmore Cave, Co. Kilkenny.

This was a one-of-a-kind event, to see bats in a unique environment and appreciate what amazing species they are.

The event was completely booked out and held over 2 nights in September. Those lucky enough to be in attendance got to see a fantastic display of activity from Natterer's, Daubenton's and brown-long eared bats and observe them in a very unique habitat. Swarming takes place in autumn months and is a mating behaviour that ensure wider gene flow among bat populations, some bats travel large distances to swarming sites.

We are very grateful to the Office of Public Works (OPW), who manage Dunmore Cave, who gave us permission for this event and facilitated the experience.



## The Inaugural Bat Ball and Presentation of the Aoibheann Gaughran Award.

We closed out 2024 on a high note, by hosting the Inaugural Bat Ball in November, in the Hardiman Hotel, Galway - a night to celebrate and reminisce on all of the fantastic work and projects that have been completed over the past 20 years.

Dinner and drinks were followed by dancing and the presentation of the inaugural Aoibheann Gaughran Award. Aoibheann was a dedicated conservationist and volunteer and the award honours her memory by acknowledging the dedication and hard work of the winner, in the area of bat conservation. The award was presented to Dr. Kate McAney, who has spent the last 30 years working and volunteering tirelessly in the area of bat conservation. Kate was amongst great company in the nominees and is a very worthy winner.

We finished out the night with a raffle and would like to thank all of the wonderful sponsors of the amazing prizes, as well as all of the sponsors of the bat ball - we are most appreciative of your support.



## Training

### Irish Bat Monitoring Programme

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 2024, our Senior Projects Manager trained 6 new volunteer teams on the Car-Based Monitoring Scheme, during 3 online training workshops. 217 new volunteers were trained for the All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey. All of the new volunteers were trained online in 4 training sessions. For the Brown Long-Eared Bat Roost monitoring 7 new volunteers were trained in 2 online training and additional in-person on-site sessions. 40 new volunteers were trained for our newest monitoring scheme, the Woodland Monitoring in 5 training workshops; 4 online and 1 in person for the National Trust.

### Have a Natterer Webinar Series

As part of our series of events to mark our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we launched the 'Have a Natterer' webinar series. This enables us to deliver online events on topics of interest to members and supporters. We delivered 4 webinars from April to December in 2024, as follows:



- 'Mind Yourself: Supporting Volunteers in stress-reduction techniques' – delivered by House of Balance
- 'Modelling Functional Connectivity of Bat Species for Strategic Planning and Species Conservation' – delivered by Domhnall Finch;
- 'Make your Home a Nature Reserve' – delivered by Donna Mullen
- 'Hibernating Pipistrelles in the UK – What We Know So Far – Tina Wiffen

## Online Training Platform

In November 2023, we rolled out the first 2 modules on our Online Training Platform: An Introduction to Bats and Using Detectors. This free-to-access course, allows beginner bat enthusiasts to learn the basics of bats and their ecology and learn more about bat sounds and how to use a bat detector.

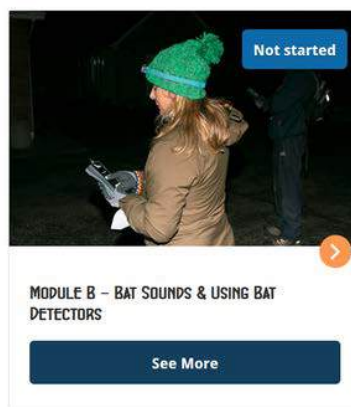
In 2024, 322 people registered to access this course. By the end of 2024 108 students had completed the 2 Modules of this course.



**In progress**

MODULE A – INTRODUCTION TO IRISH BATS & THEIR ECOLOGY

See More



**Not started**

MODULE B – BAT SOUNDS & USING BAT DETECTORS

See More

### COURSE CONTENT

Expand All

- Module A – Introduction to Irish Bats & Their Ecology  
10 Topics | 1 Quiz Expand
- Module B – Bat Sounds & Using Bat Detectors  
9 Topics | 1 Quiz Expand

## LBAP and OPW Training

2024 marked quite a year nationwide, as we saw the Biodiversity Officers in each of the county councils step into their roles. This is a significant development ensuring the development and implementation of biodiversity plans and actions remain at the forefront of each county council throughout the country.

We played a role in helping Biodiversity Officers get up to speed on bat conservation and bat-related issues at council level, by delivering an online webinar to biodiversity officers in May 2024, to assist in the development of Local Biodiversity Action Plans for each council.

Karen Healy, our Projects Coordinator, delivered in-person training to 19 biodiversity officers in Athlone, Co. Westmeath in July on bat ecology, bat surveying and how to carry out a bat walk.

We see this training as very important in terms of helping to ensure that bats and their habitats are protected by the local authorities, both in county development plans, as well as during the planning process.

David Clarke carried out 2 in-person training courses with OPW staff on 'Bat Roosts in Trees' in October 2024, so staff know how to conserve Irish bats when they come across a bat roost in a tree.



## Publications

Biodiversity Ireland - Summer 2024  
*Biodiversity Tales - Bats*

Dr. Niamh Roche contributed to this publication produced by the National Biodiversity Data Centre, to update readers on the projects Bat Conservation Ireland were working on in 2024, including:

- Online Training Platform - Course 1
- Development of an Education Strategy
- Development of Bat Panel
- Woodland Monitoring Scheme
- Sponsorship of 2 Tidy Towns Awards

**BIODIVERSITY TALES**

**Events Calendar 2024**

<b>July 2024</b> Have a Natterer! Webinar with special guest speakers	<b>August 2024</b> 27th - 29th Heritage Week 24th - 25th International Bat Night	<b>September 2024</b> Autumn Swarming Event
<b>October 2024</b> Bat Appreciation Month JOIN US FOR A VERY SPECIAL EVENT AT AN AMAZING LOCATION!	<b>November 2024</b> Have a Natterer! Webinar with special guest speakers	<b>December 2024</b> Big Bat Quiz of the Year

**Bats**

**Bat Conservation Ireland Celebrates its 20th Birthday!**

**B**at Conservation Ireland turns 20! Join us for a suite of anniversary events and celebrations that will include online talks, quizzes, an autumn swarming event, and a very special event in October – keep an eye on our membership newsletters and social media pages for details.

We are also delighted to announce that our free online training, Course 1 – Introduction to Bats and Using Detectors, is now available to all at [training.batconservationireland.org/](https://training.batconservationireland.org/) Once you register on the training platform, you can complete the two modules of this introductory course in your own time. In it, you will learn about Irish bats and how to use a tuneable detector to identify the most common species.

In late 2023, we welcomed a new member of staff to our ranks. Karen Healy is now Project Coordinator with Bat Conservation Ireland. Karen is currently reviewing our Education Strategy, coordinating the Brown Long-eared Roost Monitoring Scheme, and liaising with bat groups. She has already trained in a new panel of over 30 educators who will be able to deliver bat talks and walks during the summer months. If your organisation would like to request a bat talk or walk in your locality please contact us here: [www.batconservationireland.org/get-involved/request-bat-walk-talk-event](https://www.batconservationireland.org/get-involved/request-bat-walk-talk-event), and we will do our best to facilitate you.

2024 is the second year of a pilot Woodland Bat Monitoring scheme. David Clarke, our Bat Ecologist, has been working on rolling out this scheme in the same counties surveyed in 2023 (Meath, Kildare, Cavan and Wicklow). We will also be incorporating new woodland sites, in counties Longford, Monaghan, Sligo and across Northern Ireland, in the coming months. This survey targets two species that we do not currently monitor – whiskered and Natterer's bats. If you are based in these areas and are interested in finding out more about the survey please contact: [davidc@batconservationireland.org](mailto:davidc@batconservationireland.org).

The bat maps on [BiodiversityIreland.ie](https://biodiversityireland.ie) were last updated prior to the publication of the Atlas of Mammals in Ireland (2016). At the end of 2023, we forwarded our National Bat Database to the National Biodiversity Data Centre. This database includes over 100,000 bat records from many sources, including monitoring schemes, consultancy surveys and verified bat records that were submitted to the Data Centre by members of the public. The updated bat maps for Ireland have now been uploaded to [maps.biodiversityireland.ie](https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie).

In other upcoming projects, Bat Conservation Ireland is sponsoring two Tidy Towns Special Awards to the value of €1,500 each – one for a playground sculpture and another for an Art Mural. The closing date is June 5th 2024. See [www.tidytowns.ie/competition/2024-special-award-entry-forms](https://www.tidytowns.ie/competition/2024-special-award-entry-forms). In addition, we are currently starting a new project on Gardening for Bats and will be creating lots of new materials and resources for all you keen gardeners out there!

In January 2024, Bat Conservation Ireland was sorry to lose a very valued member of staff, Dr Tina Anghney. Tina worked for Bat Conservation Ireland from 2005, when she set up Ireland's first large scale volunteer-led bat monitoring scheme, the All-Ireland Daubenton's Waterways Survey. Tina also coordinated the Brown Long-eared Bat Roost Monitoring Scheme. Tina was instrumental in developing Bat Conservation Ireland into a well-regarded eNGO, both nationally and internationally, and ensuring that monitoring and other projects were carried out to a very high standard. We wish her every success in her future endeavours.

**Dr Niamh Roche**  
BAT CONSERVATION IRELAND  
[niamh@batconservationireland.org](mailto:niamh@batconservationireland.org)

**BIODIVERSITY TALES**

### Bats

The summer months are pretty hectic at Bat Conservation Ireland. Along with all the volunteer surveys and training, we tend to be inundated with requests for bat talks and walks in the summer months. Local bat groups are sometimes able to cater for some requests, but our new Bat Panel members are also now able to step into the breach to help run bat talks and walks for us. As a result, in 2024, we were able to massively increase the number of bat events we run throughout the summer. Reaching out to local communities is hugely important in educating people about the importance of bat conservation.

Gardening for Bats is a new project we started this year in response to a question we are often asked: 'What can I do for bats?' We've been working with gardeners and other stakeholders to develop materials on our new website [gardeningforbats.com](https://gardeningforbats.com). We also attended the nursery and garden centre trade show Glas in July to connect with industry and gather opinions on how to develop the project. In August, we spent a few days filming in fabulous gardens in Dublin, Meath and Wicklow, and we now have five short videos in the works explaining how to garden for bats. Watch this space for more developments!

We continued our year of 20th anniversary celebrations in 2024 with a relaxing 'Self-care for Volunteers' workshop in June, along with several online 'Have a Natterer' talks. A highlight of our anniversary celebrations so far was a moonlit bat swarming event at Dunmore Cave, Co. Kilkenny in September. With the help of the OPW staff on site, we set up a harp trap and thermal vision scopes and were able to witness bat autumn swarming behaviour throughout the cave. We also caught a number of healthy Natterer's, Daubenton's and Brown Long-eared bats over the course of two evenings, which were identified, weighed and released.



Filming with Sharon Matthews for our 'Gardening for Bats' videos. © Damien Gallagher

Another highlight of the year yet to come is the much-anticipated Bat Ball taking place in the Harcourt Hotel in Galway on November 10th. Tickets for this event are on sale now – see the events page on our website. It will be a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and new, with fine food and entertainment planned. The recommended dress code is 'Gothic Formal', so least!

We will also be announcing the winner on the night of the Aoiibheann Gaughran Award, which honours the memory of Aoiibheann, a devoted conservationist and bat volunteer.



**Dr Niamh Roche**  
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In 2024, we continued the woodland bat monitoring pilot scheme, which has exceeded to more counties with the help of a number of Biodiversity Officers, as well as into Northern Ireland with the help of Northern Ireland Bat Group, the National Trust and Woodland Trust. Participants walked along mapped routes in their local woodlands while recording bat sounds on bat detectors. We will be analysing the data in the coming months to see how well it is working for monitoring whiskered and Natterer's bats.

Overall, the Irish Bat Monitoring Programme, with four schemes to count six bat species, went very well in 2024 despite another summer of dull weather. Thanks so much to all of our supporters who took the time to carry out roost counts, walk transects and to drive surveys across the island of Ireland.



**Dr Niamh Roche**  
BAT CONSERVATION IRELAND  
[niamh@batconservationireland.org](mailto:niamh@batconservationireland.org)

Biodiversity Ireland - Autumn 2024  
*Biodiversity Tales - Bats*

Dr. Niamh Roche contributed to this publication, to update readers on the projects Bat Conservation Ireland were working on, including:

- Gardening for Bats Project
- 'Have a Natterer' Webinar Series
- Bat Swarming Event at Dunmore Cave
- The Bat Ball and the inaugural presentation of the Aoiibheann Gaughran Award

## Media


Bats and bat conservation work received very good media coverage in 2024. This work is important, as it provides another avenue for us to engage with the public. We highlighted that bats are protected species and that they play a very important role in biodiversity and sustaining a healthy environment.

Media pieces which featured Bat Conservation Ireland, or which we contributed to were:

- 22 March 2024 - Niamh Roche, Project Manager of the Bats and Bugs Project carried out an interview with Claire Byrne, as part of 'The Claire Byrne Show' on RTE Radio 1 to discuss this project and bats -  
<https://www.rte.ie/radio/radio1/clips/22374576/;>
- 31 March 2024 - Donna Mullen's helpful tips to make the planet better from our own backyards - Darragh McManust - Irish Independent -  
<https://www.independent.ie/entertainment/books/book-reviews/donna-mullens-helpful-tips-to-make-the-planet-better-from-our-own-backyards/a551649973.html>
- 13 April 2024 - Milder and shorter winters due to climate warming are forcing some bat species to change their ways Ella McSweeney - Irish Times -  
<https://www.irishtimes.com/environment/2024/04/13/milder-and-shorter-winters-due-to-climate-warming-are-forcing-some-bat-species-to-change-their-ways/>
- 15 July 2024 - Niamh Roche, Project Manager of the Gardening for Bats project, carried out an interview with Maura Derrane, as part of 'The Oliver Callan Show' on RTE Radio 1 to discuss this project -  
<https://www.rte.ie/radio/radio1/clips/22415396/;>
- 20 July 2024 - Learn about nature's resilience in new Wicklow webinar series - Myles Buchanan - Irish independent -  
<https://www.independent.ie/regionals/wicklow/lifestyle/learn-about-natures-resilience-in-new-wicklow-webinar-series/a968711570.html>

## Media

- 22 July 2024 - Niamh Roche, Projects Manager with Bat Conservation Ireland contributed to the '[In in Your Nature](#)' Podcast with Ricky Whelan and Niall Hatch
- 11 September 2024 - Seven Ways to Improve Biodiversity on your Farm- Kelsey Daly - Irish Farmer's Journal - <https://www.farmersjournal.ie/news/news/seven-ways-to-improve-biodiversity-on-your-farm-834123>
- 8 October 2024 - Cathaoirleach launches Roscommon Town Decarbonisation Zone - Roscommon People - <https://roscommonpeople.ie/cathaoirleach-launches-roscommon-town-decarbonisation-zone/>
- 1 November 2024 - Radio Kerry New - Killarney takes first place in Kerry in Tidy Towns Award - Bat Conservation Ireland Tidy Towns Special Award

Irish Independent  News Opinion Business Sport Life Style Entertain

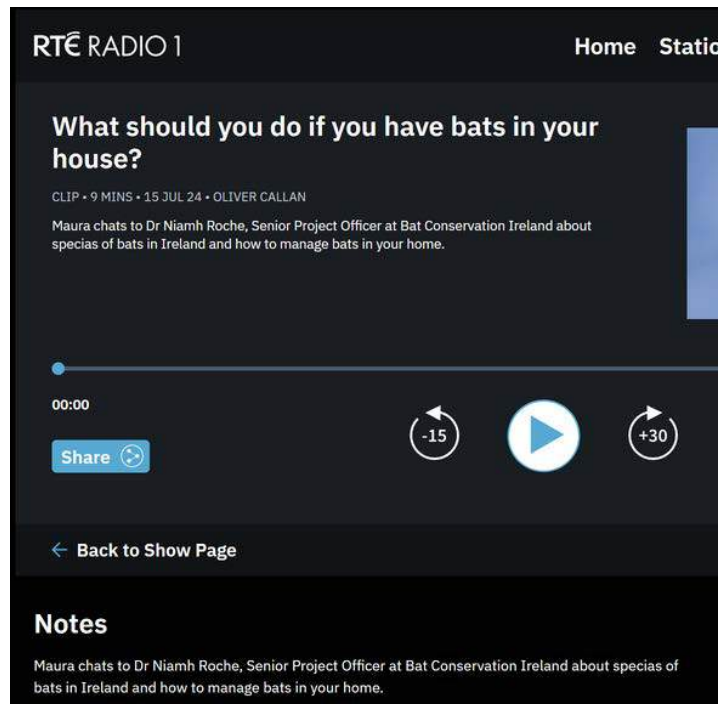
### planet better from our own backyards

Non-fiction



Donna Mullen offers practical and achievable wildlife tips

Darragh McManus  
Sun 31 Mar 2024 at 02:30




RTÉ RADIO 1 Home Station


### What should you do if you have bats in your house?

CLIP • 9 MINS • 15 JUL 24 • OLIVER CALLAN

Maura chats to Dr Niamh Roche, Senior Project Officer at Bat Conservation Ireland about species of bats in Ireland and how to manage bats in your home.

00:00

Share 

-15  +30

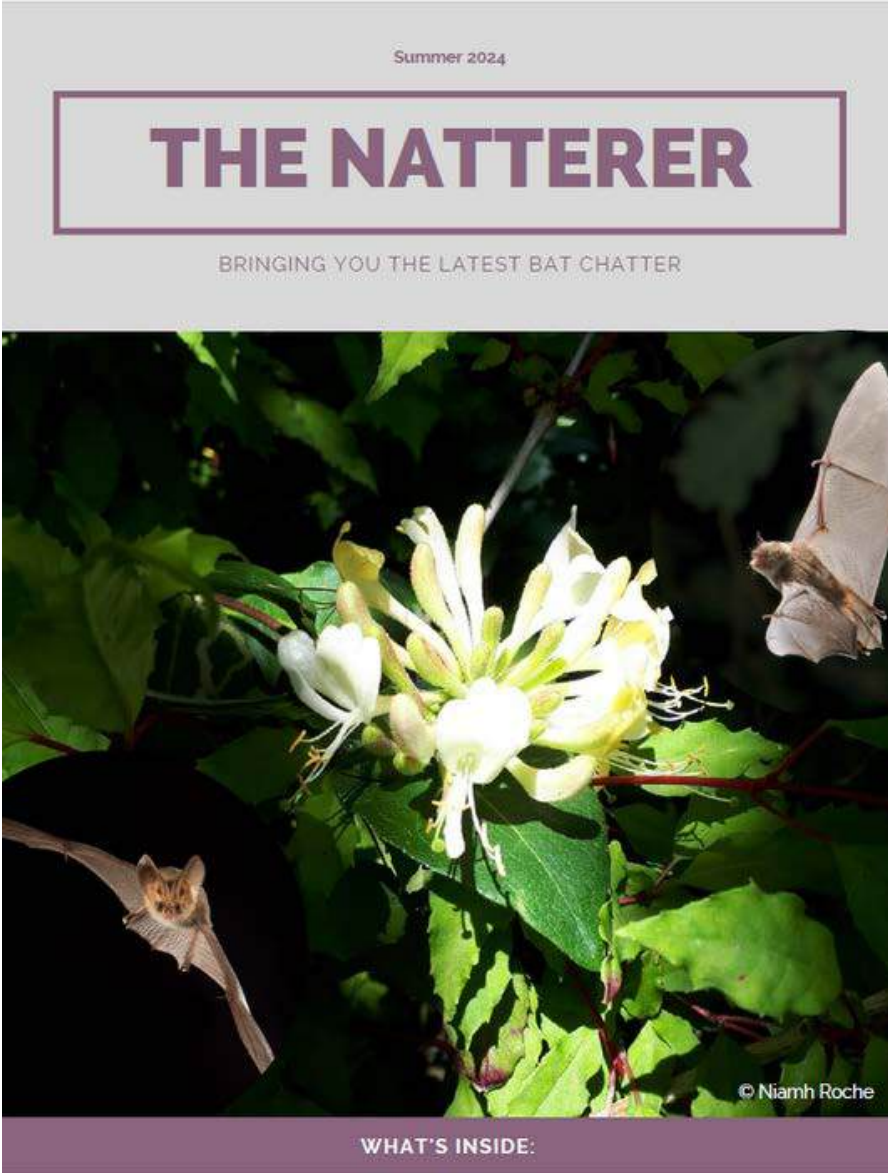
[← Back to Show Page](#)

### Notes

Maura chats to Dr Niamh Roche, Senior Project Officer at Bat Conservation Ireland about species of bats in Ireland and how to manage bats in your home.

## Newsletter

Bat Conservation Ireland publishes a 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 2024, we published 1 newsletter, which was sent out to our membership in Summer.



Summer 2024

# THE NATTERER

BRINGING YOU THE LATEST BAT CHATTER

© Niamh Roche

**WHAT'S INSIDE:**

State of Nature Review- 3	Gardening for Bats Project - 6	Biodiversity Week: 2024 - 7	20 years of Bat Conservation Ireland - 9
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# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

## Bat Groups

There are currently 11 bat groups around the country that are affiliated with Bat Conservation Ireland. Galway Bat Group preceded the foundation of Bat Conservation Ireland, with its formation going back to the 1980's. The Bat Groups offer the opportunity for 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
- Midland Bat Group
- Wexford Bat Group
- Wicklow Bat Group



Additionally Northern Ireland Bat Group exists as an individual entity, however there are close links between Bat Conservation Ireland and all of the bat groups around the country. The groups had a great year, as they were able to get out and carry out in-person activities. Short reports from each of the groups follows.

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Cavan Bat Group

There are currently 5 members of Cavan Bat Group and they were very active on the Irish Bat Monitoring Schemes during the monitoring season, as follows:

### All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterways Survey:

August 2024 - 2 surveys were carried out in Deerpark Forest, Virginia, Co. Cavan

August 2024 - 2 surveys were carried out at Ballyduff Bridge, Ballinamore, Co. Cavan

### Brown Long-eared Roost Monitoring Survey:

June/July/August 2024 - 3 roost counts were carried out at Drung Church, Co. Cavan

June/July/August 2024 - 3 roost counts were carried out at the Church, of Ireland, Swalinbar, Co. Cavan

June/July/August 2024 - 3 roost counts were carried out at West Knockbride, Tunnyduff, Bailieboro, Co. Cavan

June/July/August 2024 - 3 roost counts were carried out at Ardbraccan Church (St. Ultan's Church of Ireland Cemetery), Navan, Co. Meath

### Car Based Monitoring:

July & August 2024 - 1 Car Transect Survey was carried out in Co. Cavan

### Bat Box Monitoring

Cavan Bat Group carried out monitoring of bat boxes at Killeshandra, Co. Cavan

### Training

Members of Cavan Bat Group also participated in Bat Handling Training at Annagh Lough, Woodland, Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan in June 2024.

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Cavan Bat Group

Additionally, the group participated in the Neighbourhood Bats Project. A static detector was deployed at Con Smith Park, Cavan Town for 10 nights from 7-16 September 2024 inclusive.



Don't throw away those gloves so quickly  
(Photo: R. O'Connell)

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Dublin Bat Group



There are currently 5 members of Dublin Bat Group and the main activites they carried out in 2024 were as follows:

### Bat Walks

18 October 2024 - Bat Walk carried out in Raheny, for Raheny Tidy Towns, Dublin

23 September 2024 - Bat Walkd carried out for Ultra fusion (young adults with autism) in Dodder Park, Dublin

2 October 2024 - Bat Walk carred out with the Swords Beavers Group, Co. Dublin

10 October 2024 - Bat Walk carried out for Rush Tidy Towns, Co. Dublin

### Bat Box Monitoring

Bat box checks were carried out at Marlay Park, Rathfarnham, Dublin on 20 September 2024.



Dublin Bat Group carrying out a Bat Walk in rush, Co. Dublin

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Donegal Bat Group

Donegal Bat Group formed in 2024 and headed up by our Projects Coordinator, Karen Healy, they really hit the ground running. Karen carried out all of the activities for the group, as part of her voluntary work and had dedicated a lot of time in harnessing the interest of bats in Donegal, by providing a number of activities in 2024, as follows:

### Bat Walks

- 18 May 2024 - Batty Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, delivered By Donegal Bat Group
- 18 May 2024 - Bat Safari at Swan Park, Buncrana, Co. Donegal, delivered By Donegal Bat Group
- 23 May 2024- Discover the Night at Inch Island Wildfowl Reserve, Donegal, delivered by Donegal Bat Group
- 25 May 2024 - Moonlit Bat Safari at Ards Forest Park, Co. Donegal
- 19 August 2024 - Donegal Bat Safari, along the River Bank Walk, Donegal Town, with Donegal Bat Group

### Neighbourhood Bats Project

Donegal Bat Group also participated in the Neighbourhood Bats Project and deployed a static detector at Bonemaine, Bridgend, Co. Donegal over the space of 38 nights from 17 August to 24 September inclusive.

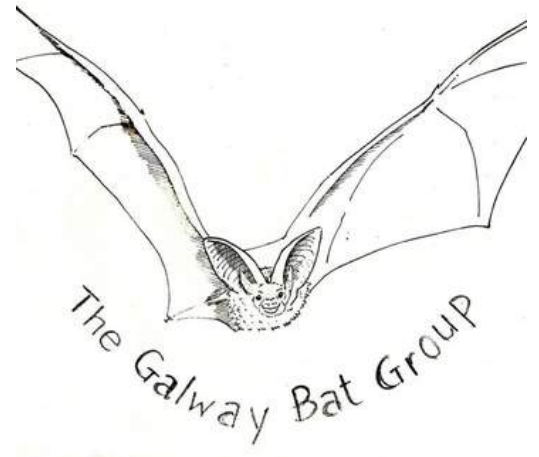


# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Galway Bat Group

Galway Bat Group members were active in leading walks and talks throughout Galway city and county in 2024. Events were as follows:



### Bat Walks

20 May 2024 - Bats of Merlin Woods, County Galway

22 May 2024 - Galway City walk: University of Galway Campus and Cathedral

23 May 2024 - Bat walk and Talk with Galway Bat Group and Spiddal Tidy Towns

19 August 2024 - Bat Walk in Merlin Woods, County Galway



Bat Walk at Merlin Woods, Co. Galway  
August 2023



Bat Walk at Merlin Woods, Co. Galway  
August 2023

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Kildare Bat Group



Kildare Bat Group had a very busy year in 2024 and carried out numerous activities throughout the country.

### Bat Walks

- 18.05.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk, Rathmore, Co. Kildare
- 25.05.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk, Ardclough, Co. Kildare
- 08.06.2024 - Charity Bat Walk & Talk, Rossnaree, Co. Meath
- 22.06.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
- 06.07.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk - KWR Charity Walk, Athy, Co. Kildare
- 11.07.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk, Russell Library, Maynooth University
- 01.08.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk with Caragh, TT, Digby Bridge, Co. Kildare
- 17.08.2024 - Newbridge Heritage Walk, Linear Park, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
- 20.08.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk with Caragh, TT, Digby Bridge, Co. Kildare
- 23.08.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk, Dundalk, Co. Louth
- 24.08.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk, St. Flannan's Cathedral, Killaloe, Co. Clare
- 31.08.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk, Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare
- 04.09.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
- 28.09.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk, Sallins, Co. Kildare
- 02.10.2024 - Bat Walk & Talk, Lucan, Co. Dublin

### Other Events

- 24.03.2024 - Presentation on Laois Bats, Bird Watch Ireland: Laois Branch, Parish Hall Portlaoise, Co. Laois
- 30.05.2024 - "Get your ears in" - Listening to Bat Sounds, Leixlip Reservoir
- 04.06.2024 - "Get your ears in" - Listening to Bat Sounds, Sallins, Co. Kildare
- 12.06.2024 - "Get your ears in" - Listening to Bat Sounds, Liffey Bridge, Lucan
- 19.06.2024 - "Get your ears in" - Listening to Bat Sounds, St Catherine's Park
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# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Kildare Bat Group

- 22.08.2024 - Bat Talk, St John's Hall, Birr, Co. Offaly
- 19.10.2024 - Bat Talk: Kildare Biodiversity Conference & Information Stand
- 24.10.2024 - Educational Bat Talk, Scoil Bride, National School, Rathangan
- 19.11.2024 - Educational Bat Talk, Scoil Bride, National School, Rathangan
- 12.12.2024 - Educational Bat Talk, Scoil Bride, National School, Rathangan

### Bat Box Installation/Monitoring

- 10.02.2024 - Bat Box Monitoring, Newbridge Linear Park, Newbridge TT
- 10.02.2024 - Donadea Forest Park, Co. Kildare
- 18.04.2024 - Bat Box Monitoring, Ardclough, Co. Kildare
- 07.09.2024 - Bat Box Monitoring NUI Maynooth & Donadea
- 08.09.2024 - Bat Box Monitoring Linear Park, Newbridge
- 09.09.2024 - Bat Box Monitoring & GPS Tagging, Maynooth University
- 11.09.2024 - Bat Box Monitoring & GPS Tagging, Donadea, Co. Kildare

### Habitat Surveys/Bat Surveys

- 16.04.2024 - Habitat Survey, Rathmore, Co. Kildare
- 18.04.2024 - Pre-Bat Walk Survey, Ardclough, Co. Kildare
- 20.04.2024 - Pre-Bat Walk Survey, St. Flannan's, Cathedral, Killaloe, C. Clare
- 16.05.2024 - Pre-Bat Walk Survey, Leixlip Reservoir, Leixlip, Co. Kildare
- 29.05.2024 - Pre-Bat Walk Survey, Linear Park, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
- 06.06.2024 - Habitat Survey, Sallins, Co. Kildare
- 15.06.2024 - Habitat Survey, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
- 15.06.2024 - Bat/Roost Survey, Killeen Church, Co. Meath

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Kildare Bat Group

29.06.2024 - Bat/Roost Survey, Killaloe, Co. Clare

13.07.2024 - Bat Survey/Roost Count, Milltown, Co. Kildare

14.07.2024 Bat Survey/Roost Count, Celbridge, Co. Kildare

30.07.2024 - Pre-Bat Walk Habitat Survey , Caragh TT, Caragh, Co. Kildare

31.07.2024 - Pre-Bat Walk Habitat Survey, Kiloran Manor

12.08.2024 - Pre-Bat Walk Habitat Survey, Tullamore & Birr, Co. Offaly

14.08.2024 - Pre-Bat Walk Habitat Survey, Dundalk, Co. Offaly

18.08.2024- Pre-Bat Walk Habitat Survey , Killaloe, Co. Clare

26.08.2024- Pre-Bat Walk Habitat Survey , Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare

### All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Surveys

- 3 Sites: Carton House, Meath Bridge Kilcock, Pikes Bridge Maynooth
- 1 Site: Jackson Bridge, Maynooth
- 2 Sites: Rathangan
- 1 Site: Clane, Alexander Bridge

### Woodland Pilot Scheme

- 01.06.2024 - Woodland Bats, Pre-Habitat Survey, Killinthomas, Rathangan
- 26.06.2024 - Woodland Bats Survey, Killinthomas Woods, Co. Kildare
- 27.07.2024 - Woodland Bats Survey, Killinthomas Woods, Co. Kildare
- 29.07.2024 - Woodland Bats Survey, Donadea, Co. Kildare
- 09.08.2024 - Woodland Bats Survey, Killinthomas Woods, Co. Kildare
- 16.08.2024 - Woodland Bats Survey, Donadea, Co. Kildare

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Kildare Bat Group

### Brown Long Eared Roost Monitoring

20.05.25, 04.07.2024 & 15.08.2024 - BLE BAT Survey, Donadea, Co. Kildare

23.05.25, 28.07.25 & 30.08.2024 - BLE BAT Survey, Clogharicka, Co. Kildare

11.05.2024 - BLE Bat Survey, Killaloe, Co. Clare

### Neighbourhood Bats Scheme

Kildare Bat Group also participated in the Neighbourhood Bats Project and deployed 3 static detectors at Geashill, Co. Offaly, over the space of 4 weeks from 18 August to 14 September inclusive, Stradbally, Co. Laois, over the space of 2 weeks from 15 September to 30 September inclusive, and at a site in Naas, Co. Kildare.

Kildare Bat Group collaborates with many groups including the Irish Wildlife Trust, Abbeyleix Bog Project, Portlaoise Men Sheds, BWI and KBW whom we offer our support and knowledge on "All Things Bats".

Their aim is to promote and increase the awareness of bats through our infectious enthusiasm and to conserve Irelands only flying mammal through our events, hard work and participation in all national monitoring schemes and any project work that come their way in Co. Kildare.

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Limerick Bat Group

### Meadowbrook Community Biodiversity Project

On 19 May 2024, Limerick Bat Group ran a bat walk and talk in Meadowbrook, Corbally, Co. Limerick. Children's activities were also available, along with bat boxes and advice for their ever improving community space.

### Cappamore Show

As part of the Cappamore Show, Limerick Bat Group facilitated a stand as part of the environmental tent at the show. Limerick Bat Group members spoke to the public and carried out an interivew with Tipp FM at the show.

### Limerick Show

As part of the Limerick Show, Limerick Bat Group facilitated an information stand, where they spoke to the public and offered advice on how to help grounded bats.

### Bat Walks

Limerick Bat Group carried out 2 bat walks in 2024:

- 10/10/2024 - Astellas, Killorglin, Co Kerry - Walk and Talk to staff and families on factory site;
- 25/10/2024 - Halloween Bat Walk, as part of Samhan festival. There were 25 attendees of all ages and everyone had great fun and even heard some bats!



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Mayo Bat Group

Mayo Bat Group joined the Friends of Mayo Dark Skies to give a talk and walk in Westport on 21st May 2024. They met at the Westport Library where the talk was given and it focused on the effects that light has on bats and how to use outdoor lighting in a sensitive and more responsible manner. Mary Roberts of Mayo Bat Group focused on the effect of lighting on bats in particular.



Mary Roberts of Mayo Bat Group presenting at event on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024

There were 30 attendees booked for the night and the walk followed the Carrowbeg River. There was an abundance of Daubenton's bats which were flying over the river catching insects. A few pipistrelle species bats were also heard using heterodyne detectors.

### Neighbourhood Bats Project

Mayo Bat Group also participated in the Neighbourhood Bats Project and deployed a static detector at Enniscoe Estate, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo over the space of a month from 16 August to 14 September inclusive.



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Meath Bat Group

Meath Bat Group, even though still a relatively small group, had a busy year in 2024. They carried out the following activities:

### Bat Walks

18 May 2024 – Bat Walk and Talk along the Barrow River, Moynalty, Co. Meath

27 May 2024 – Bat Walk and Talk in the grounds of the Sonairte Centre, Laytown, Co. Meath

13 September 2024 – Bat Walk and Talk along the Barora River, Meath-Cavan Border

### All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey

Participated in the All Ireland Daubenton's Waterway Survey and surveyed 1 site in Meath.

### Neighbourhood Bat's Project

Meath Bat Group participated in the Neighbourhood Bat's Project and deployed a static detector at Mary Lynch's Shop, Newcastle, Moynalty, Kells for 22 nights between August and September 2024.

### Roost Conservation

Meath bat group also engaged in roost protection and 2 sites. The entry of roost at one site was reopened, but unfortunately there was no follow-up on the outcome at the second site.

### Bat Rehab

Meath Bat Group assisted with 2 bat rehab cases. 3 bats were involved; one sadly has to be euthanised and 2 were returned successfully to the wild.

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Midland Bat Group

Midland Bat Group carried out a number of events in 2024 as follows:

### Bat Walks & Other Events

- Bat Walk in the grounds of Belvedere House and gardens, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
- Bat Walk Dun Na Sí Amenity Area, Moate, Co. Westmeath



Midland Bat Group

Both walks were carried out in May 2024, as part of the activities for Biodiversity Week 2024. They also facilitated an information stand at the Recharge event for Scout Leaders at Portlick, Co. Westmeath.

They also participated in the Irish Bat Monitoring Programme as follows:

### All Ireland Daubenton's Waterways Survey

- 2 surveys carried out at Inny River, Ballymahon, Co. Longford - August 2024
- 2 surveys carried out at Abbeyshrule, Co. Longford - August 2024
- 2 surveys carried out at Ballincarrigy, Co. Westmeath - August 2024
- Provided additional support to the 2 surveys carried out at Island Bridge, Kenagh, Co. Longford - August 2024

### Brown Long Eared Survey

- St. Catherine's, Curry, Co. Longford - June, July, August 2024

### Woodland Monitoring

- Participated in the Woodland Monitoring at Newcastle Wood, Ballymahon, Co. Longford in June and August 2024
-

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

## Wexford Bat Group

In their 2<sup>nd</sup> year as a Bat Conservation Ireland affiliated group, Wexford Bat Group carried out a number of educational activities throughout the year as follows:

### Bat Walks and Talks

24 May 2024 - Bat Talk at JFK Arboretum, New Ross, Co. Wexford

25 May 2024 - Bat Talk at Bunclody Library, Bunclody, Co. Wexford

23 August 2024 - Bat Walk and Talk at Riverside, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford

20 September 2024 - Bat Walk and Talk at Courtown Woods, Courtown, Co. Wexford

### Other Events

17 November 2024 - Display Stand at the Wildfowl Centre, the Slobs, Co. Wexford

7 December 2024 - Bat Box building with WNFC, Nicholas Egan Farm, Adamstown, Co. Wexford

### All Ireland Daubenton's Waterways Survey

2 surveys carried out at North Slobs, Co. Wexford - August 2024

2 surveys carried out at Glandoran, Co. Wexford - August 2024

2 surveys carried out at Hollyfort, Co. Wexford - August 2024

### Brown Long Eared Survey

St. Paul's Clone, Co. Wexford - July & August 2024

### Neighbourhood Bats Project

Wexford Bat Group also participated in the Neighbourhood Bats Project and deployed 2 static detectors at Johnstown Castle and Gorey over a period of 4 weeks in August and September 2024.



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Neighbourhood Bats -

with a Little Help from Neighbourhood Citizen Scientists

In early 2021, Bat Conservation Ireland applied to the Heritage Council Community Heritage Grant Scheme for funding to run a community project through the county Bat Groups, affiliated with Bat Conservation Ireland. The purpose of this project was to carry out small scale monitoring of bats at a static location for a 6-week period to see what data could be recorded. This project resulted in the successful publication of the report: Neighbourhood Bats: with a little help from neighbourhood citizen scientists.

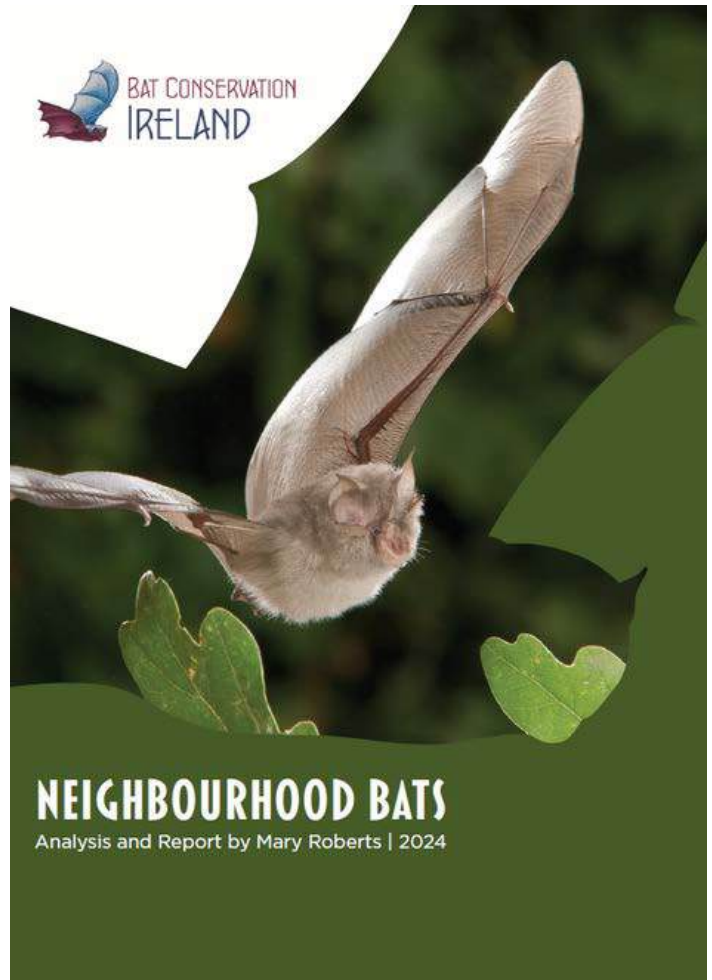
This project was run again in 2024 and managed by Mayo Bat Group, Chair Mary Roberts, who managed the project throughout. Mary carried out the data analysis of from all of the different sites and drafted the final report.

7 bat groups participated in the project and

statics were deployed at 10 sites throughout the country during various times over a 3-month period - August to October 2024.

The group volunteers identified locations, activated the equipment and set it up at the site, monitored the detector through a specialised App on their phone, visited the site on a weekly/bi-weekly basis to check the detector, batteries and SD cards. They also recorded specific data on custom designed data sheets and returned the SD cards and data sheets for overall analysis.

The data was analysed by Mary using Kaleidoscope Pro software to identify the bats present and a report was compiled on the results.



# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

## Neighbourhood Bats

with a Little Help from Neighbourhood Citizen Scientists

The benefits of the project are that there is an increased level of data available on bats throughout the island that can be checked now and into the future for any trends similar to the projects already undertaken by Bat Conservation Ireland. It also allows anyone with no expertise in bats, to contribute to collecting records of their local bat fauna.

### Sites used for the Neighbourhood Bats Project

	Site
1.	Near Con Smith Park, cavan Town, Co. Cavan
2.	Bonemaine, Bridgend, Co. Donegal
3.	Stradbally, co. Laois
4.	Naas, Co. Kildare
5.	Public Green, Centre of Geashill, Co. Offaly
6.	Enniscoe Estate, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo
7.	Mary Lunch's Shop, Newcastle, Moynalty, Kells, Co. Meath
8.	Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath
9.	Gorey, Co. Wexford
10.	Johnstown Castle Estate and Gardens, Co. Wexford

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

## Tidy Towns

### Sponsorship of Special Awards



Bat Conservation Ireland was delighted to be one of the sponsors of Tidy Towns Special Awards 2024 – sponsoring 2 of the Special Awards.

We sponsored the production of a public mural or street artwork and a playground sculpture that highlighted the importance of bats as nocturnal insectivores. We also asked entrants to highlight how bats have been helpful in scientific research on various topics such as robotics, ageing, medicine, etc. The theme for both pieces of artwork was ‘Batty Benefits’!

The competition launched in Spring 2024 and we received very high quality applications, with Castlegregory Tidy Towns winning the competition for the playground sculpture and Sligo Tidy Towns winning the competition for the art mural.



Castlegregory TT Recipients of the Art Mural Award



Sligo TT Recipients of the Playground Sculpture Award

# COMMUNITY ENAGAGEMENT

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## Citizen Scientist Bat Surveyors

The All-Ireland Bat Monitoring Programme, relies on volunteers to complete surveys. We provide training 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 more than 600 participants in the numerous schemes we manage. In 2024, 553 volunteers contributed their time and skill to participate in the All Ireland Bat Monitoring Programme and the Woodland Monitoring, which was an increase of 51 on 2023.



CBM Surveyor Phil Bradley

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 2024, training courses were primarily carried out online, which reduces the carbon emissions associated with travel and offers more flexibility for those wishing to attend the training.

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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 full spectrum 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 of Ireland.

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## Summary of the Car Based Monitoring Scheme 2024

For the Car-Based Bat Monitoring Scheme 56 individuals participated in surveys of 27 squares around the island. Online training courses were provided in 2024 for seven new teams, and revision training was provided to two teams, also via Zoom. Data from 51 surveys, all of which had >10 completed transects, were available. In total 12,740 bat passes were recorded, 47% 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 (which were used up to 2019) and Batlogger detectors (which were used from 2017 onwards), using a covariate to account for differences in the two. Although yearly estimates of most species were slightly lower in 2024, trends of the three target species continued to increase. Confidence intervals of the common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and Leisler's bats are all well above their baseline indices indicating they each show a significantly increasing trend.

Nathusius' pipistrelle trends are still unclear but increased a little in 2024. The brown long-eared roadside trend has been increasing slightly since 2020, although confidence intervals still indicate a reasonably stable trend. 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 in 2023 and 2024 and the upper confidence interval is again above the baseline index. This may indicate that the consistent downward trend observed from 2015 to 2021 has begun to level out.



## 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 2024

Two hundred and fifty waterway sites were surveyed by 210 teams in 2024, consisting of 466 individual surveys.

Of these 250 sites, 216 (86.4%) were surveyed twice in the month of August. A total of 18,294 'Sure' Daubenton's bat passes were recorded on 217 waterway sites (86.8%). The number of Daubenton's bat passes recorded in 2024 was slightly higher than for 2023 (17,967) and higher than each of the survey years from 2019-2021. Overall, the trend line for Daubenton's bat across the island appears to be fairly steady from year to year with error bars consistently encompassing the baseline.



## Brown Long-eared Bat Roost Monitoring Scheme

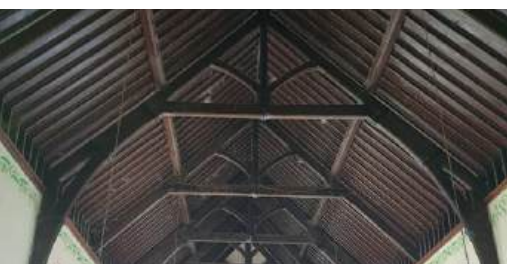
More recently, in 2007, the Brown Long-eared Bat Roost Monitoring Scheme was piloted and established. This project concentrates on counts of brown long-eared bats at their roosts and is conducted by individuals with a greater level of experience in bat identification than is necessary for the waterway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

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 2024

In 2024, 37 volunteers participated which included two roost owners. The highest number of roosts were in Counties Cavan (n=6), Galway (n=5), Cork (n=4), and Wicklow (n=5 each). Four new roosts were surveyed by the coordinator in County Offaly (n=1), County Donegal (n=2), and County Mayo (n=1). These roosts will be surveyed again in 2025 to determine suitability for inclusion in the monitoring scheme for 2026. 45 roosts were surveyed in total in 2024, 4 of these are not included in the trend dataset as it was the first year of monitoring.

Volunteers provided count data for 29 roost sites while an additional 9 roosts were surveyed by the coordinator in 2024. One roost was surveyed by the coordinator and a team of volunteers. In total, 110 monitoring surveys were carried out at 41 roosts. Using the highest results for each roost monitored in 2024, the total number of brown long-eared bats counted was 1,555 individuals. Average counts in 2024 were almost identical to 2023. The smoothed GAM curve remains roughly level, slightly above the baseline 2009 value, but not significantly different to it, as has been the case for the last ten years. Nonetheless, the error bars encompass the baseline, so the population is, overall, 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 2024

National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT) regional staff forwarded count data from 121 lesser horseshoe bat sites in winter 2024 and 143 sites in summer 2024.

In winter 2024 9,800 bats were counted, and 12,117 bats were counted in summer 2024. From 2012 onwards there has been excellent consistency in counts at lesser horseshoe sites, which improves the robustness of the monitoring dataset.

Over the past 20 years this species has increased in winter by an average of 3.15% per annum. Summer trends mirror this, slightly less steeply (2.84% per annum since 2004). A high number of new sites have been found by local NPWS staff in the past few years, in 2024 alone, 26 new sites were added to the roost database.



## Woodland Pilot Monitoring Scheme

This scheme aims to monitor woodland bat species, namely the *Myotis* species Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*) and Whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) and also brown-long eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*). The surveys involve volunteers undertaking walking transects in participating woodlands at night, using a special full spectrum bat detector to record bat echolocation activity along the route.

The monitoring scheme was very successful in 2024, which was the first iteration of the scheme to take place since the 2023 pilot study.

### Summary of Lesser Horseshoe Bat Monitoring 2024

A total of 26 sites were surveyed across the Island. This consisted of 17 sites in the ROI and nine sites in NI. The ten sites in the ROI that were originally established in the 2023 pilot study were re-surveyed in 2024, along with seven new sites located in counties Sligo (two sites), Monaghan (two sites), Longford (two sites) and Kildare (one site). In NI, sites were established in Armagh (two sites), Fermanagh (three sites), Down (two sites), Antrim (one site) and Derry (one site).

In total, 72 nights of data were recorded comprising more than 35,000 individual recordings, each of which was manually verified for the presence of woodland bats.



Natterer's bat hibernating © Paul van Hoof



Whiskered bat hibernating © Paul van Hoof

## Woodland Pilot Monitoring Scheme

Of the 26 sites surveyed in 2024, Natterer's bat was detected at 23 (88.5% of total, Table 1). Whiskered bat was also detected at 23 (88.5%) of the sites surveyed, while both species were detected at 20 (76.9%) of the sites. The months with the highest activity levels of woodland bat species were the months of June and July.

We are currently preparing for the 2025 scheme and will be adding sites in counties Donegal, Offaly, Limerick, Kilkenny and Meath in the ROI as well as a number of sites located throughout NI..



Natterer's bat in flight © Paul van Hoof



Whiskered bat in flight © Paul van Hoof

## Bat Conservation Ireland Small Grants Scheme

In February 2024, after an evaluation and review of the scheme, we relaunched the Bat Conservation Ireland Small Grants Scheme, which helps fund bat education, conservation and research projects around the country.

The closing date for applications was 16 March 2024 and grantees were notified of the status of the applications in April 2024.

In all 12 applications were received and, of those, 7 projects were awarded funding.

By the end of 2024, 6 projects were completed.

The Projects completed are as follows:

	<b>Project</b>
1.	Bats of Lusk Town - Bat Survey and Bat Box Project
2.	Effectiveness of static detectors for monitoring microhabitat use in Lesser Horseshoe Bats
3.	Sligo Tidy Towns Bat Box Scheme and Bat Walks
4.	Bat Walk and/or Talk. St John's Old Cemetery Restoration Group
5.	3B Project Bat Box Project
6.	Doman's Wood Bat Survey

# COLLABORATION

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gardeningforbats.com

## Gardening for Bats Project

This project was borne out of a question we are often asked by members of the public 'How can I help conserve bats?' Over the years, Bat Conservation Ireland has had many members, volunteers and supporters wondering what they can do to help bats, in their own community.

The project aims to help people make improvements, particularly in gardens of urban and peri-urban areas, so that bat populations can thrive in these environments. We wanted to develop tools and guidelines to encourage more wildlife friendly gardening. This project complements existing plans and initiatives such as the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.

The project has four main aims:

1. Encourage garden owners and groundskeepers to make their outdoor spaces more bat friendly;
2. Raise awareness of importance of bats and how to protect them;
3. Support indigenous garden plant and nursery growers and the garden centre industry by marketing native plant species that are also night pollinator and bat friendly;
4. Collect evidence to measure success.

In order to achieve our aims, this project incorporated a number of work packages to realise Phase 1 of the project.

### Steering Committee

In late spring we approached possible stakeholders to set up a Steering Group for the project. Our steering group members include members of staff at Bat Conservation Ireland as well as:

- Kate Chandler National Biodiversity Data Centre
- Dónall Flanagan Teagasc
- Jo Petford Future Forests Nursery
- Fiona MacGowan Botanist

# COLLABORATION

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gardeningforbats.com

## Gardening for Bats Project

We held our first meeting (via Zoom to minimise travel and time) on June 12<sup>th</sup> 2024 to devise main approach to developing materials, networking and project dissemination. Steering group members had useful contributions to make regarding contacting the industry stakeholders such as garden centres.

We held a second meeting on July 29<sup>th</sup> 2024 to discuss project work to that point. The steering group members assisted with putting together a suitable plant list for nurseries/gardening centres and the design of the project logo.

Our final meeting with the Steering Group took place on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> of November and the main focus of discussion was how to move the project forward in terms of working with garden centres and nurseries in 2025 and onwards, as well as ways to promote the project among gardeners and community groups.

### Establish Networks

Following discussions with members of the Steering Group we decided that the best way to get feedback and sign up from the horticulture industry would be to attend Glás, the trade exhibition in Tallaght National Basketball Arena, on July 18<sup>th</sup> 2024. We had a large exhibition backdrop designed and printed for this exhibition, but this is reusable and we intend to use it at future expos and festivals. Two members of staff set up and attended the exhibition.

The aim of attending Glás was to gather names of industry professionals interested in participating in the project and to discuss the possibilities for the project in the future. We were able to gather contact details of people who are interested in becoming involved in the project going forward. We also made contact with some Irish nurseries who would like to include a 'bat friendly' logo on specific plants.

### Development of Education Materials

A large amount of work went into developing the video materials for the website.

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# COLLABORATION



gardeningforbats.com

## Gardening for Bats Project

YouTube from July to October.

We put out a request for tender for creation of short videos (x 5) in late spring. The tender was awarded to Speed Motion Films based in Lisburn. We sent a request to our members who already garden for bats to ask for possible locations to film. We visited a number of locations in Meath, Dublin and Wicklow and then completed filming in five gardens over two days in early August. The videos include footage from all of the gardens, pieces to camera and interviews, along with some stock footage. There are five videos that cover the following topics:

- Video 1: What is the Gardening for Bats project? <https://youtu.be/xLHshShh-CU>
- Video 2: Easy garden management techniques for bats. <https://youtu.be/FX2SPMVIMLo>
- Video 3: Features in the garden that can help bats. [https://youtu.be/\\_fp9Nih8Hyc](https://youtu.be/_fp9Nih8Hyc)
- Video 4: Choosing plants that support bats. <https://youtu.be/8LMcPnffh90>
- Video 5: How bats help gardeners. <https://youtu.be/lqLpGhY9Rwk>

Phase 2 of this project will continue in 2025, so watch this space!



# 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 a dedicated representative on the Environmental Pillar. Niamh Roche Bat Conservation Ireland's representative on the Environmental Pillar, was also recently elected to the Pillar Steering Committee.

In 2024, the following work was carried out in this capacity:

### Meetings/Workshops Attended:

- Three Pillar meetings and one Pillar Steering Committee meeting
- One meeting between the IEN and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- One workshop between the IEN and NIEL - all Ireland Forum on the Environment

Niamh also worked with An Taisce and Hedgerows Ireland on a submission to the Wildlife Legislation Review (13 September 2024)



**Irish  
Environmental  
Network**

# COLLABORATION



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**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. Donna is a former Council member of Bat Conservation Ireland and as an independent bat expert, has extensive experience in this area. She attended virtual monthly meetings as Bat Conservation Ireland's rep in 2024 and we have publicised Bat Life Europe's online events through our membership.

## **Collaborative work carried out in 2024:**

- CEDaR and Bat Conservation Trust - We provided Northern Ireland data from our monitoring programmes to CEDaR & BCT in the Spring of 2024 and continue to collaborate with the BCT on bat monitoring in Northern Ireland;
- National Trust Northern Ireland and Woodland Trust Northern Ireland - collaborated with staff from these organisations in setting up new woodland bat monitoring sites in 2024;
- Hedgerows Ireland - We collaborated with them on the submission on the Wildlife Legislation Review;
- Vincent Wildlife Trust - We discussed Article 17 reporting for lesser horseshoe bats with VWT and NPWS and collaborated on lesser horseshoe bat meetings for the LHB Species Action Plan;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) - We attended and presented at workshop in Waterford hosted by NBDC on The Future of Biodiversity Monitoring November 2024;
- The Bat Lab - Niamh Roche presented a talk on '*Bats and Bugs and Citizen Science*' in UCD in January 2024;
- Attended Bat Conservation Trust Online Workshop - '*Bat Migration and Offshore Wind Energy*';
- Attended online meeting of UK Agencies Steering Group on renewable Energy and Bats;
- Collaborated with Understory on the publication '*A Beginner's Guide to Bat Surveying*', published in November 2024;
- Presented a Lunchtime talk to Bat Conservation Trust UK '*Irish Bats: Citizen Science and Monitoring*' in March 2024;
- Niamh Roche represented Bat Conservation Ireland (in a voluntary capacity) at Meath County Council Stakeholder meetings for the Meath Biodiversity Action Plan - attended 3 meetings in 2024.

# 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
- Vincent Wildlife Trust



## Nathusius' Pipistrelle Research Group

Nathusius' Pipistrelle Research Group received an NPWS Small Recorders Grant in 2024, to carry out an 'Investigation of Nathusius' pipistrelle and Leisler's bat activity along the eastern coastline of Ireland from Counties Louth to Wexford, Ireland.'

Static bat detector units were deployed along the coastline of 5 counties as follows:

- County Louth: 3 locations
- County Meath: 1 location
- County Dublin: 5 locations
- County Wicklow: 3 locations
- County Wexford: 2 locations

Site selection, deployment and collection for this Phase 1 study was determined by safe, accessible sites and locations were selected as close as possible to the coastline to ensure that the unit was detecting individuals of bats flying along the coastline. The static units were deployed from 16th August to 9th October 2024.

The data was analysed using Kaelidoscope Pro and a total of 270 nights of recordings were completed for Period 1 (range from 10 - 24 nights per unit). A total of 281 nights of recordings were completed in Period 2 (range from 2 - 30 nights per unit). Nathusius' pipistrelle was recorded at twelve (86%) of the fourteen locations surveyed during Period 1. The number of bat passes ranged from 0 to 62 bat passes.



Static 3, Port Oriel, Clougherhead, Co. Louth  
(Photo: Tina Aughney)



Figure 1: General location of static units during Phase I, 2024 study.

## Research Collaboration with UCD

Bat Conservation Ireland has been working in collaboration with Prof. Emma Teeling at the Bat Lab in UCD since 2019, on an Ecosystems Services Research project.

The overall aim is to determine the role that bats play in Ecosystems Services. In other words, what insects do bats consume and how does that help maintain a healthy and diverse environment as well as provide a service for food production, for example as an alternative to controlling pests using pesticides?

A project to examine this topic was awarded funding (2/3 funding) by the Community Foundation for Ireland with project partners the National Biodiversity Data Centre and University College Dublin in late 2020. There were two planned stages to the project in 2021 - one to develop a field guide to Ireland's bats and the second to set up a website and recruit volunteers to send samples of bat droppings to UCD using a specific protocol and sampling kit.

Analysis of the Bats and Bugs faecal samples was completed in late 2022/early 2023 by the UCD BatLab. All of our surveyors received personal feedback in spring 2023 about the bats and insects that were detected in their samples. James Nolan, the main researcher in UCD's BatLab who carried out the DNA metabarcoding, presented the initial findings at the 10th Irish Bat Conference in March 2023 and won the 'Vincent Weir Memorial Prize' for best student presentation. In order to illustrate the project and some of its results, we commissioned an animation to be created. Following a tendering process WhiteNoise Studios in Belfast were chosen to develop the animation in two parts and this was launched in April 2023 along with results of the study in the Royal Irish Academy in Dawson Street, Dublin. Citizen scientists and project funders were invited to the launch. This event included talks by PhD student Gwen Hurpy as well as James Nolan, followed by a wine reception, and was attended by over 50 people. In addition, James Nolan presented his talk again online via Zoom in May 2023, so Bat Conservation Ireland members and project participants who were unable to attend the in-person event could learn about the results.

## Research Collaboration with UCD

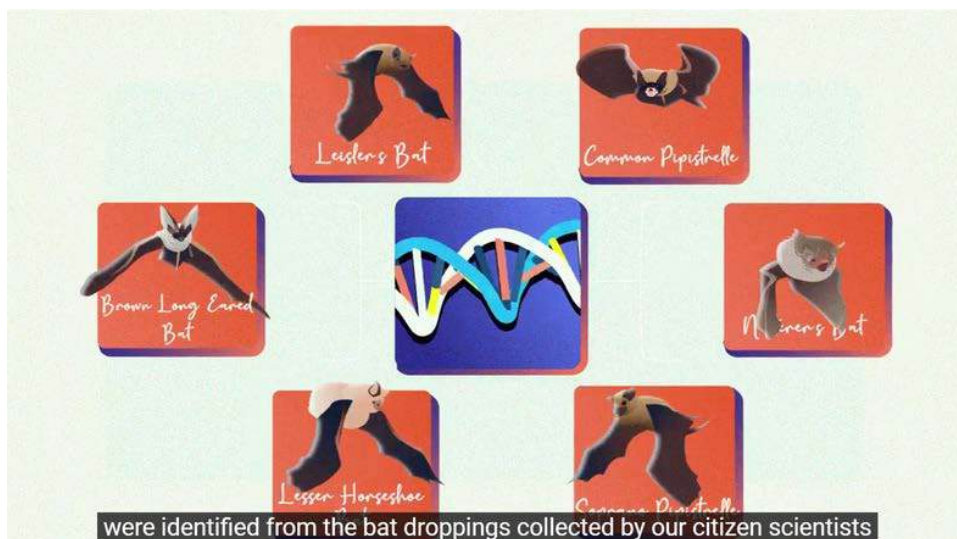
In 2023, we uploaded the animations to YouTube and they are available to view here:

- <https://youtu.be/2P0OTZz1ZbA?si=uJMXUE6Uzissak7E>
- [https://youtu.be/atvndsattak?si=c7CmQP\\_UtavwEVpw](https://youtu.be/atvndsattak?si=c7CmQP_UtavwEVpw)

The final elements of this project were completed in the first half of 2023. In 2024, we continued to promote these resources and presented the research results at 2 conferences/symposia both to domestic and international audiences.



Screenshot of Bats and Bugs Animation Video



Screenshot of Bats and Bugs Animation Video

## 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:

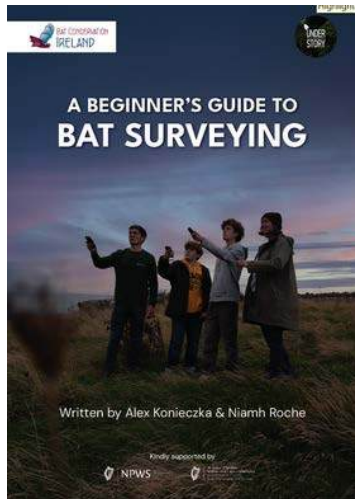


1. Define, predict and quantify the effects of climate change on bats across Europe (Working Group 1);
2. Establish strategies to develop a network to monitor and predict changes in bat distribution and inform future management and policy (Working Group 2);
3. Evaluate the effects of climate change on 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. Niamh represented Bat Conservation Ireland on 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.

There were no meetings held in 2024, however members of the working group, contributed to research papers, with a view to having them published in 2025.

## Publications



**Title:** *'Beginner's Guide to Bat Surveying'*.  
**Authors:** Konieczka, A. & Roche N. (2024)  
**Published by** Understory, Ireland. 31pp.

## ATU - Lesser Horseshoe Bat Research

PhD student David Smyth, ATU supervised by Allan McDevitt, continued research into Lesser Horseshoe Bats, which Niamh Roche contributed to.

## University of Ulster - Research on Street Lighting

In 2024, Bat Conservation Ireland assisted a Masters student at University of Ulster in his final thesis research. We provided bat activity and street lighting data from the car-based bat monitoring scheme (2020-2023 inclusive) and Kevin O'Reilly carried out mapping and modelling work to investigate the impact of street lights, including new LED lights, on bat activity along driven survey routes.



## Bat Conservation Ireland's plans for 2025 and beyond are as follows:

### Organisational Structure

- In 2021, Bat Conservation Ireland developed a new Strategic Plan for the years 2022-2025. Bat Conservation Ireland is committed to realising the work of this plan in 2025;
- In 2024, an independent consultancy, carried out an interim review of our Strategic Plan, the Council and Staff will look at how to implement the recommendations in 2025;
- In 2024, Bat Conservation Ireland formally reported to the Charities Regulator on our compliance the Governance Code. In 2025, we will continue reviewing, amending and updating our governance policies and procedures, to ensure compliance with the code and our commitment to developing and implementing good governance;
- Following on from the affiliation with Bat Conservation Ireland in 2020, the Bat Groups met compliance by providing reports on their activities in 2024. We will continue to liaise with the bat groups, provide administrative support and advice necessary to help them meet compliance requirements.
- In 2024, we put out to tender for work to begin on a new organisational database, to help us manage and process data in a more streamlined way and support our staff in managing their projects. The database is now live as at end of Quarter 1, in 2025 and we are working to further develop it in to 2025.

### Conservation Work

- As we won the tender for monitoring for Irish Bat Monitoring Programme (2022-2027), we intend to meet the requirements of this tender through the 5 year period;
  - Continue to develop materials and resources for the Online Training Platform to provide training on bat surveying and different aspects of conservation to fill a gap in training provision and free up resources currently carrying out in-person training;
  - We carried out an evaluation of our our small grants scheme and relaunched it in 2024 using reserve monies, to support the work of small, volunteer and community-
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# FUTURE PLANS

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led conservation work around the country. We intend to run this scheme in 2025;

- Develop our work on monitoring schemes and roll out an expanded Woodland Bat Monitoring pilot scheme in 2025 to encompass additional counties and sites;
- Bat Conservation Ireland will continue its 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 3 websites - [www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org), [www.learnaboutbats.org](http://www.learnaboutbats.org), [www.batsandbugs.org](http://www.batsandbugs.org);
  - Updating our main website [www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org) to ensure it is user friendly and provides current and relevant information;
  - Conduct bat walks and talks, centrally through Bat Conservation Ireland staff and through the county bat groups around the country;
  - 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, continue to develop our social media presence through, platforms newly engaged with - LinkedIn and TikTok, to help engage and educate the general public about bats;
  - Continue to deliver events through our bat panel of educators across the island, support them in delivering events and provide ongoing refresher training to panel members.

## 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;
  - Continue with Phase 2 of 'Gardening for Bats', which aims to improve gardens as bat habitats, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas. In this phase we will engage with garden centres and plant suppliers through an educational and awareness campaigns;
  - We intend to support another 2 Tidy Towns Special Awards in 2025, in the theme of gardening for bats, to help promote this project and to provide real life examples of how gardens and areas can be enhanced to help support bat activity;
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# FUTURE PLANS

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- Help support Tidy Towns on projects such as bat box schemes, 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;
- Continue to work with Bat Life Europe and Eurobats through our representative appointed, 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

- Ensure that data is uploaded to our database housing bat records to ensure it is accurate and up to date;
- Liaise with NBDC around housing of bat records and feed data into their database repositories;
- Continue participating in research collaborations and if the COST Action Network: Climbats receives new funding to continue their work, we will collaborate with them
- Continue participating in research collaborations such as UCD's Batlab and any future work on Ecosystems Services and bat research;
- Continue collaborating with researchers and contributing to research publications.

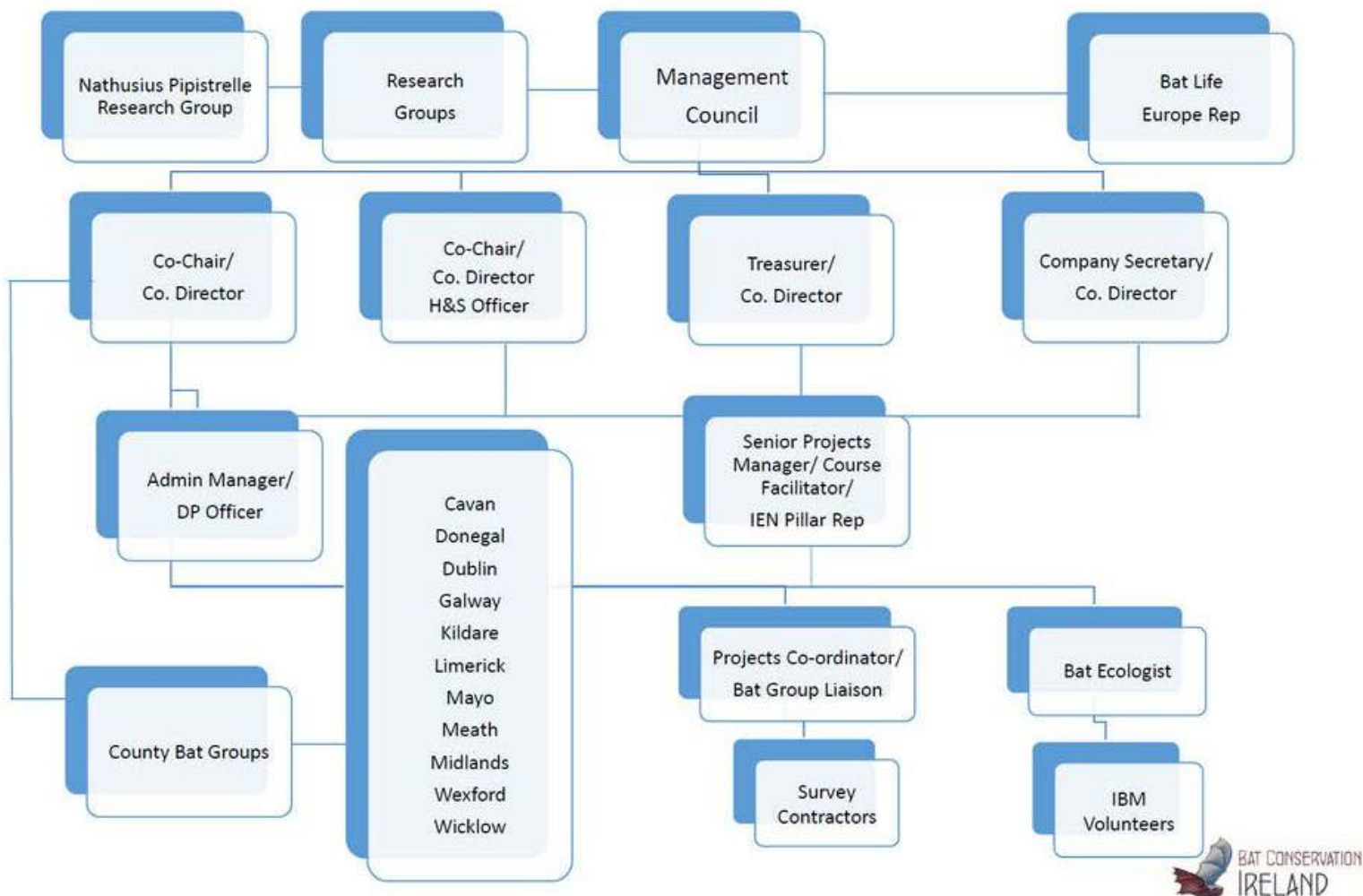


# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Bat Conservation Ireland is a non-governmental organisation with charitable status. We are a membership organisation, with a governing Council (Comprised of 9 Council members in 2024) and a small, paid part-time staff. We have 11 bat groups at various stages of development, around the country. Our current organisational structure is laid out in the matrix below.

## Bat Conservation Ireland

## Organisational Structure



# STAFF

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## David Clarke

David joined Bat Conservation Ireland in May 2023 as a Bat Ecologist. He has over ten years' experience working in environmental education and conducting research in a range of ecological fields.

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David became interested in bats while working and living in New Zealand. During this time, he initiated and coordinated two research projects examining the presence and distribution of long-tailed bats in the wider Auckland region, a species classed as 'Nationally Critical' and needing urgent conservation action to protect remaining populations. Both projects involved active collaboration with communities, ecological consultancies, local and regional authorities, and universities.

David has an honours degree in Environmental Science from the University of Galway, and a Ph.D. in Acarology, also from the University of Galway.

# STAFF

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## Karen Healy

Karen joined Bat Conservation Ireland in November 2023 as Projects Co-ordinator. Karen has over seventeen years' experience working in the community and environment sector in Northern Ireland.

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Karen has over seventeen years' experience working in the community and environment sector in Northern Ireland. As Environmental Officer at Creggan Country Park, Karen worked with a wide range of groups through the environmental volunteer programme, nature themed events, community fridge, tree nursery and environmental education programme.

Karen has been an active volunteer committee member of the Northern Ireland Bat Group since 2007 and served as Chairperson from 2015 - 2022. In both roles she has helped recruit and train new volunteers, created an education resource, organised member meet ups, and volunteer events. Karen is a licenced roost visitor (NIEA) and registered bat carer (Bat Conservation Trust). She has volunteered in the Irish Bat Monitoring Programme (Car-Based Bat Monitoring and All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterway Survey) and completes a Roost Count and Hibernation Survey each year for Bat Conservation Trust's NBMP.

Karen has a degree in Environmental Science and MSc in Environmental Management from Ulster University and has a TQUK qualification in Education and Training and ILM qualification in Volunteer Management and Mentoring.

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# STAFF

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## Dawn Quinn

Dawn joined Bat Conservation 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, as well as carrying out conservation project on a local level
- 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 and more recently the Woodland Pilot Monitoring Project
- Community Engagement - Liaising with other Community groups such as Tidy Towns and Men's Shed for our Bat Box scheme



# MEMBERSHIP

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Bat Conservation Ireland is a membership organisation that greatly values its members, volunteers and supporters, all 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 2024, through their membership and also through their invaluable voluntary work.

Volunteers with Bat Conservation Ireland play a key role in supporting the work of the bat monitoring projects carried out annually. In 2024, there were 366 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. In 2024, we were able to provide a range of activities and volunteering opportunities for members to engage in.

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 & NIEA)	€139,284
Woodland Pilot Monitoring Scheme	€55,185
Core Funding (IEN – Dept. of the Environment, Climate & Communications)	€51,479
IEN – Biodiversity Week	€3,200
Membership and Donations	€11,812
Sales of Merchandise, Bat Ball Ticket Sales & Training Courses	€20,403
Heritage Council	€40,000
Bat Group Projects	€2,349
Other Funding (IEN)	€1,456
Once-off Bat Projects	€65,552

**€390,720**

## Expenditure

Irish Bat Monitoring Programme	€23,342
IEN Biodiversity Week	€284
Once-off Projects	€17,148
Ecosystems Services Project	€26
Bat Group Projects	€11,361
Woodland Pilot Monitoring Scheme	€26,433
Bat Workshops/Courses/Walks	€11,754

## Core Costs

Wages and Salaries	€156,454
Social Welfare Costs	€17,196
Staff Defined Contribution Pension Costs	€3,031
Staff Training	€2,990
Management Expenses	€3,308
Insurance	€7,235
Printing, Postage & Stationery	€4,310
Computer Costs	€6,714
Motor Expenses	€1,821
Hotel, Travel & Subsistence	€191
Legal & Professional Fees	€607
Consultancy Fees	€8,000
Bank Charges	€233
Bad Debts	€2,207
Staff Welfare	€1,124
General Expenses	€2,018
Subscriptions	€217
Auditor's Remuneration	€3,426
Depreciation	€381

**€311,811**

**€78,909**

## Net Surplus\*

\*Net Surplus funds will form part of our reserve funds, intended to be used to fund BCireland Small Grants Scheme and longer-term conservation projects, including a bat house.  
Net Surplus for 2024 includes project monies deferred from previous years.

2024 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"

# IN 2024

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

**Purpose: Irish Bat Monitoring Programme**  
**Contract Term: 5 years (2022-2027)**  
**Total Value of Contract: €536,866**

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

**Purpose: Core Funding**  
**Grant Term: 2024-2025**  
**Total Value of Funding: €51,480**

## **The Heritage Council, Organisation Support Fund**

**Purpose: Build an Online Training Platform**  
**Grant Term: 2024**  
**Total Value of Funding: €50,000**

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

**Purpose: National Bat Distribution Project**  
**Grant Term: 2023-2024**  
**Total Value of Funding: €26,717**

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

**Purpose: Woodland Monitoring Pilot Scheme**  
**Funding Term: 2023 - 2024**  
**Total Value of Funding: €25,482**

**Kildare County Council**

**Purpose: Woodland Monitoring Pilot Scheme**  
**Funding Term: 2024**  
**Total Value of Contract: €2,000**

**Longford County Council**

**Purpose: Woodland Monitoring Pilot Scheme**  
**Funding Term: 2024**  
**Total Value of Contract: €6,160**

**Meath County Council**

**Purpose: Woodland Monitoring Pilot Scheme**  
**Funding Term: 2024**  
**Total Value of Contract: €2,000**

**Monaghan County Council**

**Purpose: Woodland Monitoring Pilot Scheme**  
**Funding Term: 2024**  
**Total Value of Contract: €6,160**

**Sligo County Council**

**Purpose: Woodland Monitoring Pilot Scheme**  
**Funding Term: 2024**  
**Total Value of Contract: €6,160**

**Wicklow County Council**

**Purpose: Woodland Monitoring Pilot Scheme**  
**Funding Term: 2024**  
**Total Value of Contract: €7,000**

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

**Purpose: An investigation into the distribution of Nathusius' pipistrelle on lakes in County Cavan. Phase 2.**  
**Grant Term: 2024**  
**Total Value of Funding: €1,120**



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**

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



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

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Bat Conservation Ireland  
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Dublin 7.

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E-mail: [admin@batconservationireland.org](mailto:admin@batconservationireland.org)  
[www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org)



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

