

Bat Worker Forum Tuesday 14th September 2021

19.00 – 20.40 Via Zoom

ACTION POINTS

1. Jan Collins to pass on feedback to CIEEM: it's been disappointing that the beta mitigation guidelines were released during the busy bat season as many simply do not have time to look at them and feedback. Please release these types of documents during winter months when there is more time to input to them.
 2. Lisa Worledge to ask Julie Harwood what support NE are offering to get lapsed and removed VBRVS back on to the list. How active are they in contacting people to encourage them to get back onto the network. Getting to point where active VBRVs are hanging by a thread and don't know how much longer can hang on.
 3. Lisa Worledge to look into differences highlighted in advice on rabies vaccinations between bat carer trainees and VBRVs and raise this with NE's Julie Harwood.
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1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The meeting was chaired by Steve Roe. Eight members of BCT staff were in attendance. At the start of the meeting, attendees used the chat function on zoom to say hello.

Attendees present at meeting

Aaron	Davies	Glamorgan Bat Group
Abby	Packham	BCT
Alexandra	Saunders	Somerset Bat Group
Alice	Campion	
Aline	Denton	North Ceredigion Bat Group
Amanda	Barton	Devon
Andreia	Correia de Costa	BCT
Andy	Selman	RSK ADAS
Ann	Gleave	
Anthony	Chivers	
Beck	Harrington-Harding	Suffolk Bat Group, Suffolk Bat Rescue
Ben	Christie	Norwich
Carla	Dunne	Devon Bat Group
Carol	Williams	BCT
Cat	Bryant	South Lancashire Bat Group
Catherine	Dew	Norwich/Suffolk Bat Groups
Chantal	Helm	Herts and Middlesex
Charlotte	Packman	Wild Wings Ecology
Christine	Hipperson-Jervis	Norwich Bat Group
Christine	Sherlock	BrumBats
Claire	Taylor	Berkshire Bat Group/ Wild Eton Wick
Claudia	Gebhardt	BCT
Daniel	Hampson	
David	Sherrington	South Lancashire Bat Group
Emma	Steatham	NatureScot

Gail	Armstrong	North Lancashire Bat Group
Jean	Matthews	Gwynedd Bat Group / BCT BoT Vice-Chair
Jennifer	Furby	South Lancashire bat group
John	Harris	Norfolk Wildlife Services
John	Parker	Nottinghamshire Bat Group
Jon	Woodham	Hampshire bat group
Joy	Phillips	
Karin	de Rijck	
Kate	Taylor	BrumBats/Staffordshire Bat Group
Kayleigh	Roebuck	
Kit	Stoner	BCT
Leigh-Ann	Barran	
Lisa	Worledge	BCT
Louise	Sherwell	Warwickshire
Lucy	Fay	Herefordshire Bat Group
Lynn	Whitfield	Surrey Bat Group
Lynsey	Robinson	
Maggie	Brown	West Yorkshire bat Group
Marie	Canny	BCT
Matthew	Norris-Hill	Hampshire Bat Group
Merryl	Gelling	Spires Ecology
Morgan	Hughes	University of Wolverhampton
Nathaniel	Dove	Wessex Woodland Management
Nik	Knight	Hampshire Bat Group
Peter	Smith	Smith Ecology Ltd
Ross	Baker	Surrey Bat Group
Sally-Ann	Hurry	Kent Bat Group
Seth	Lambiase	
Sophie	Dennis	BCT
Steve	Parker	South Lancashire Bat Group
Steve	Roe	Derbyshire/BCT Trustee
Sue	Worsfold	Shropshire Bat Group
William	Walton	North Lancashire Bat Group

Apologies

Julie Harwood	Natural England
Katherine Walsh	Natural England
Jon Dees	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Sam Dyer	Natural Resources Wales
Becky Wilson	Helpline Manager at BCT
Hannah Van Hesteren	Helpline Manager at BCT
Sarah Forsyth	Wiltshire and Avon Bat Group
Chloe Delgery	Cornwall Bat Group
Mike Critchley	Hampshire Bat Group
Liz Walsh	Jersey Bat Group
Su Shimeld Kevern	@natureinart

2. Minutes and actions from last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted with no corrections. The minutes can be found on the BCT website: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/conferences-symposia/national-bat-conference/annual-bat-workers-forum>.

Action	Outcome
1. Colin Morris to ask Natural England to provide dates for the publications mentioned in Natural England's update, particularly the new Mitigation Guidelines.	The beta version of the Mitigation Guidelines (lead by CIEEM) are now available: https://cieem.net/i-am/current-projects/bat-mitigation-guidance/ . NE did acknowledge these had been delayed.
2. Lisa Worledge to ask Jo Ferguson (BCT's Built Environment Manager) if there is a PowerPoint slide campaign pack that can be shared with bat groups about the new testing methodology paper for roofing membranes.	There is no presentation to share yet, however information is kept up to date on the website and the latest news is shared in the bat group bulletin.
3. Colin Morris to ask Natural England if there is any evidence on whether radio-tagging of female barbastelles with new-born/young dependent pups (0-3+ weeks) for 'standard' commercial infrastructure surveys is safe. At what age are pups considered to be old enough for tagging of females to be relatively low risk?	Abby Packham summarised the below response.

Written response from Kat Walsh regarding 'action point 3' above:

"This enquiry is in relation to the Norwich Western Link Road. Natural England has already responded to several parties on this matter and provided lines in the press. I refer to a few of those relevant lines here;

- Natural England issued a licence to an ecologist in March to conduct bat surveys, which had standard conditions and did not specify any time restrictions. We have a standard condition of restricting the trapping or tagging of pregnant bats, or females with new-born bats, between mid-June and mid-July. In this instance, the application had a start date of 12 July and would therefore avoid the sensitive period.*
- Natural England subsequently received information from local experts that barbastelle bats in this locality give birth later than our standard condition covers. This had the potential to cause harm to these bats if the work started on the 12 July.*
- This resulted in us issuing an amended licence to the applicant on Friday 10 July, which included more precise conditions. Following a further review of the licence application, a further modified licence was issued to the applicant on 18 July. Two conditions have been amended to provide further flexibility to the applicant, whilst ensuring the protection of the bats in this local area.*

Please note however that surveys for Barbastelle bat under this licence did not take place this year [2020] due to on site security concerns.

Update from September 2021

- *At the end of April 2021, an independent ecologist and an ecological consultant acting on behalf of the council, were issued licences to conduct bat trapping and radio tracking surveys during the pre and post partition period this year. The 'council ecologist' surveys will be used to inform Norfolk County Council's planning application and the associated assessment of species impacts for the proposed development. The licences placed restrictions on trapping dates, as agreed by both parties, to minimise the impact to the bat population.*
- *Poor weather conditions in May and subsequent delayed birthing timings resulted in Natural England issuing modified licences to both parties. Surveys work is ongoing by both parties.*
- *It should be noted that the licences issued are for carrying out survey work only, to help understand the potential impacts of the road scheme on the bat population. They do not permit any development works to be carried out.*
- *Natural England will also be providing statutory advice to the local planning authority (NCC) regarding the impact of the proposed road on protected sites and species when the planning application for the road is submitted, and considering whether to issue a bat mitigation licence should planning permission be granted."*

3. News from Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations

- 3.1. Katherine Walsh (Senior Mammal Specialist) and Julie Harwood (Volunteer Bat Roost Visitor support team lead) provided written updates for Natural England, read out by Steve Roe and Abby Packham. Lisa Worledge shared the email address for VBRVs to contact Natural England bat volunteer team: batvolunteers@naturalengland.org.uk.

See [Appendix A](#) for the written update from the Natural England species team and [Appendix B](#) for the update from the Natural England VBRV support team.

- 3.2. Sam Dyer provided an update for Natural Resources Wales, read out by Abby Packham. Abby shared the email address to request a hard copy of the State of Mammals in Wales new report: cyhoeddiadCMN@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk.

See [Appendix C](#) for the written update from Natural Resources Wales.

- 3.3. Emma Steatham provided an update for NatureScot (formerly known as Scottish Natural Heritage).

See [Appendix D](#) for the written update from NatureScot.

- 3.4. Jon Lees (Wildlife Officer) provided a written update for the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, an agency of DAERA, read out by Steve Roe.

See [Appendix E](#) for the written update from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

Queries and comments were raised by attendees during the SNCO updates as follows.

Gail Armstrong, from North Lancashire Bat Group, would like a question for Natural England to be recorded in the minutes: what support are they offering to get lapsed and removed VBRVs back on to the list? How active are they in finding out why people have dropped out, and how to get those VBRVs back on and is it getting desperate. Gail is asked to go further for visits, she does not know who is dropping off and why and it's getting to the point where she is hanging by a thread and she is not sure how much longer she can keep doing this. The more people that drop out, the more of us that's going to happen to.

Gail's follow up question is: in light of the changes in advice on rabies vaccination, where occasional bat carers are now told that they don't need to be rabies vaccinated, if they're not regularly handling bats, why do VBRVs who almost never handle bats in the course of a roost visit, still asked to be rabies vaccinated? Therefore VBRVs are dropping off the list because they have not updated their rabies vaccinations, when they may not have handled a bat for 10 years or more.

Amanda Barton, from Devon Bat Group, strongly echoed Gail's feedback in the chat. Sally-Ann Hurry from Kent Bat Group also has the same issues in Kent, with East Sussex described as dire, with Kent VBRVs having to regularly cross the border. Areas of East Sussex have no cover and people are having to contact consultants.

Lisa Worledge has taken an action on these points raised.

4. News from BCT

Kit Stoner (BCT CEO) began by explaining that the aim of the update is to provide an overview of BCT's current projects and activities, especially those relevant to Bat Groups, volunteers and bat workers. Kit acknowledged the work that BCT has undertaken with UK parliaments, through the countries' relevant working groups and government links. BCT's work mainly focuses on the steering groups responsible for species' and nature's recovery through strategy and policy. The Environment Bill is noted as especially important, including work relating to species conservation strategies. Kit also noted that The Bat Habitats Regulation Bill, which BCT does not support, has not made it back into the private members bills.

Carol Williams, (BCT Director of Conservation) went on to talk about the Roost website and Roost Awards, which were launched a year ago. The website is split into two parts, firstly case studies and secondly the partnerships with manufacturers. This allows for the sharing of best practice, research, and knowledge.

Various BCT staff then gave updates on BCT work areas which included, Biodiversity & the Built Environment, NightWatch, EchoHub, a new open-source sound library, Helpline as well as Membership, Communications and Education especially in regard to targeting younger and more ethnically diverse audiences.

Queries and comments were raised by attendees during the BCT update as follows.

Ross Baker asked: can you elaborate on the Bechstein's project that Carol mentioned? Carol Williams replied in chat: the Bechstein's bat project is building on the colonies found using 'atypical' habitats in Dorset. This was to continue in the area originally looked at under the

Dorset Heaths project as part of Back from the Brink. It also extends into Somerset I hope that is helpful. Ross: Thanks, that explains it.

Jean Matthews asked: We seem to have had a lot of enquiries directly to the group from people that haven't been able to get through to the Helpline, especially in August. I don't know if this has been due to bad weather coinciding with juveniles starting to fly and a general increase in groundings or if the Helpline capacity has been reduced? Sophie Dennis replied: thanks for your questions, we will certainly ask these and let you know when we have answers however Lisa Worledge then answered verbally that there have been reduced seasonal staff this year but that has been more than made up for by the Volunteer Bat Care Helpline service. However, there does remain some limitation to the Helpline.

Links to relevant pages, including the Roost Partnership, NBMP data submission and winner of the Kate Barlow Award shared during the BCT update via Zoom Chat can be found in [Appendix H](#).

See [Appendix F](#) for full written update from BCT.

5. Consultation on handling of bat care calls

Lisa Worledge said: As you hopefully know, from communications we have shared with bat carers and bat groups this year, BCT has had to change the way that the National Bat Helpline operates, specifically around the handling of bat care related enquiries. These calls are no longer being responded to by BCT staff directly, although staff are continuing to support members of the UK Bat Care Network and BCT still works to promote bat care best practice. These changes are necessary because of a significant funding gap for the Helpline, even with the generous contributions of BCT's supporters. We need to ensure that the service we provide is sustainable in the long term.

Earlier in the year we shared the four broad approaches as to how bat care calls could be handled:

1. Volunteer call handlers along the lines of the current out of hours service.
2. Regional/bat groups helplines take bat care calls instead of the BCT Helpline.
3. Public details get passed direct to carers via an online system.
4. Carer numbers made available direct to the public via an online system.

This summer we have been piloting Option 1. As Marie reported on during the BCT update, we have had a wonderful team of volunteers operating the Volunteer Bat Care Helpline, providing a service both out of office hours (as volunteers have done for many years) and also, for the first time this year, having volunteers take bat care related calls in office hours. This service will be continuing into the winter and we are recruiting volunteers again.

When we announced this change back in the spring we promised that we would hold a consultation with bat carers and bat groups on the other options for bat care call handling. We will be launching the consultation by the end of next month with a deadline for responses in January. We will hold two online sessions for people to ask questions about the consultation process and the options, the dates are to be confirmed but they will be between the launch date and the end of the year.

We will report on the results of the consultation and propose a way forward in late winter/early spring. It is worth noting that we may end up continuing with option 1., but equally we may move to one of the other options, depending on the results of the consultation and reflection on our experiences this summer. Whatever the final position, we need to have the Helpline working on a model that is financially sustainable. We will be in touch with all the bat carers on our network and with bat group contacts when the consultation launches.

Queries and comments were raised by attendees during the BCT update as follows.

Steve Parker asked in the chat: is it considered that there may be a risk to the viability of the Bat Care Network if funding continues to drop, even with the potential new options? Lisa Worledge replied: Maintaining the Bat Care Network is a core activity for BCT but the issue is the volume of bat care calls. We continue to have a Bat Care Coordinator and it is our intention to maintain that role. All posts at BCT are subject to continued funding of course. However, there is more that we would like to do and we continue to seek funding to support the Bat Care Network alongside the consultation around the handling of bat care calls.

6. Matters arising regionally/locally

Whilst the three English regional conferences last autumn had priority sessions as normal, this spring we introduced a change to the format of these events, where the afternoon priority session was replaced with a second workshop session. This was based on feedback from delegates and the fact that far fewer items have been raised during priority sessions in recent years. People still have the opportunity to raise priorities in bat conservation however, but online via the conference booking form and via the event app during the conference itself. The Scottish Conference kept the priorities session. The priorities raised and the detailed responses to them from all of these events are available to read on the [BCT website](#) on the relevant conference page, and were itemized and linked to in the [2021 agenda](#) which was circulated to attendees one week before the forum. Due to the large number of priorities, the availability of the information on the website and the forum running behind schedule, they were not itemized during the meeting.

7. Pete Guest Award 2021 result

This award is given in memory of Pete Guest who was an inspirational figure in the bat conservation movement for more than 20 years. Each year, the bat world is invited to nominate individuals who have made an outstanding practical contribution to bat conservation. The criteria for the award include: dedication, innovation, enthusiasm and inspiration in making a difference, both to bats and to people, helping make BCT's vision become a reality.

It was announced that the winner for 2021 was Tony Atkinson of the Cornwall Bat Group. Congratulations Tony. His acceptance speech was prerecorded and played during the Forum. Attendees congratulated Tony in the chat and used the clapping zoom reaction button.

8. Any other business

The following additional items were raised:

- 8.1. Jean Matthews regarding Steve Lucas' retirement. Jean would like to thank Steve for all his hard work over the years, especially with regards to Natural Resources Wales, he will be sorely missed. Steve was wished a happy retirement.
- 8.2. BCT Trustees stepping down. Steve Roe notes that four of BCT's Trustees will be stepping down this year and would like to give a huge thank you to them all for their hard work and dedication, noting that a wealth of bat knowledge will be greatly missed.
- 8.3. Steve Roe shared a message on behalf of Naomi, BCT's Training and Conferences Manager: We are still accepting submissions of static posters or short films about research or interesting projects to show over the National Bat Conference Weekend (29th to 31st October). If you are interested in having something displayed about your project work or bat group activities please email nwebster@bats.org.uk.
- 8.4. Lisa notes that Volume Three of British Island Bats, written along with Tina Wiffen, is calling out for more papers. If anyone has any papers in mind, or would like to write a paper for British Island Bats then please get in touch: britishislandsbats@gmail.com. Volumes 1 and 2 is hosted on BCT's website and can be found here: <https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/accessing-journal-papers/british-islands-bats>. It was noted that Steve Parker has offered to write a piece for the next edition and that Tony Atkinson wrote a piece on Bat Box Schemes for Volume 1.

At the end of the meeting Abby Packham and Steve Roe thanked everyone for attending. Attendees used the Zoom chat function to say thank you for the meeting and goodbye.

Appendices

Provided on the following pages are the updates from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations and BCT given during the meeting; appendices A – F.

During booking for the Bat Worker Forum, there was an opportunity to raise any priorities or concerns for consideration. Responses were gathered from relevant BCT staff and external organisations where appropriate. A document detailing the priorities and responses was circulated shortly before the meeting via email and on the website. This document can be found in [Appendix G](#).

In addition, as this was an online meeting, there were comments, questions and web links within the Zoom chat function. To ensure these are captured we have included them within this document at [Appendix H](#).

Please use the interactive contents list below to navigate to a particular appendix.

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APPENDIX A. Update from Natural England Species Team

1. Biodiversity 2020 – Back from the Brink

NE was awarded a £4.8m grant from HLF aimed at saving England's most threatened species. This is a cross-sector partnership program with seven landscape scale projects and thirteen species specific projects. BCT are undertaking a grey long-eared bat project, which in broad terms aims to ensure that four of the most vulnerable maternity roosts have sufficiently high foraging habitats surrounding them to support these colonies, to facilitate landscape connectivity between roosts and to prevent isolated colonies declining due to inbreeding.

Project started in 2017 due to end 2021

2. PhD's

NE is a collaborative partner, with Exeter University and the BCT on a PhD due to start in autumn on 'Valuing ecosystem services provided by UK bats under climate change'.

NE is part funding a PhD with the UWE, Bristol on 'Developing a strategic model for bat conservation legislation and planning – applications of ecological modelling, mapping and spatial ecology for horseshoe bats in Somerset, England.

3. Other research

NE is funding the Mammal Society and Sussex University to investigate the use of genomic approaches (SNP's) to replace microsatellites in population studies for bat species.

4. Publications

NE worked with the BCT, Historic England and the National Trust to update the Bats in Traditional Buildings publication.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/building-works-and-bats/>

NE is working with the BCT and a range of partner organisations/stakeholders to update the Bat Survey Good Practice Guidelines for Professional Ecologists.

NE is working with CIEEM and a range of partner organisations/stakeholders to update the Bat Mitigation Guidelines.

NE is working with the BCT to provide advice for roofing and re-roofing bat roosts. This advice covers specific issues which relate to Non-Bitumen Coated Roofing Membranes. Please refer to BCT's website for the latest updates;

<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/non-bitumen-coated-roofing-membranes>

APPENDIX B. Update from Natural England VBRV Support Team

Many thanks to all VBRVs for your contribution in the activities carried out on behalf of Natural England under the Bat Advice Service contract with BCT. Your skills, knowledge, commitment and dedication continue to be invaluable in protecting bats across England. A high level of demand for the service continues and we really appreciate the time and effort you make on a voluntary basis.

Train the trainers training

An updated digital version of this was delivered in March of this year. Feedback from the course was very positive and it has been decided to deliver the course in the same way in March 2022. We acknowledge a current lack of Trainers and as such encourage VBRVs and bat group members to consider appropriate nominations in their areas for the next course.

Health and Safety: Covid update

We continue to work on our getting back to normal protocol and would like to thank you all for your continued commitment to the role of VBRV throughout the pandemic. Look out for the next Batline issue, due at the end of September which will include all Covid updates.

Health and safety: Training

For many of our volunteers the 3-year requirement to renew the compulsory H&S training became due during 2021. Completion has been slow and as of 18/08/2021 – 181 (57%) of the 317 who have been reminded of the need to complete the training have fulfilled this requirement. 124 are overdue on completing the training currently and remain 'Inactive' until it is completed. If any volunteers would like us to resend the links to the Power point training modules please email batvolunteers@naturalengland.org.uk.

Health and safety: rabies

We are working on our database to prevent auto-generated emails to VBRVs no longer needing to update their Rabies vaccinations. Please bear with us while we get this development done. We appreciate your support.

Annual Commitment Renewal and Ladder check

Work on the last VBRV Annual Commitment Renewal and Ladder check has nearly been concluded and we will shortly be beginning to review the process for next time which will be during Winter 2021.

Sadly we have a substantial number of VBRVs (including trainers, VBRVs and trainees) who have not completed the last Renewal and this joined with those who have not completed their H&S training by the required deadline and volunteers who have not renewed their rabies vaccinations (not

trainees) leaves approximately only 190 'active' VBRVs to help deliver the Bat Advice Service Contract. If any volunteer has concerns about requirements or what they need to become 'Active' again, please contact batvolunteers@naturalengland.org.uk.

Within the next VBRV Annual Commitment Renewal and Ladder check we are hoping to reduce the questions under the ladder check section to make things quicker and easier. However, one issue that keeps reoccurring is the misunderstanding that the ladder check part only relates to NE issued ladders. This is not the case and the check is needed on any ladder used including NE provided ones, VBRV own ladders, or a VBRV work/company ladder.

Trainee induction calls

Induction calls for new trainees continue to be conducted in groups which has proved useful for networking and also for trainees to hear questions that others have. We have had a few no shows on the calls recently which has created extra work for the team. Please can we remind trainees to reply to our invitations to group induction calls as soon as possible and ask trainers to encourage trainees to attend.

Facebook group

We continue to use our dedicated 'by invitation only' Facebook group called Natural England Bat Volunteers to improve our communications with VBRV and currently have over 100 members. Any VBRVs wishing to join the group please send the email address you use for Facebook to BatVolunteers@naturalengland.org.uk.

We also have a dedicated Facebook group to help support VBRV trainers. Any trainers wishing to join this group should also please email BatVolunteers@naturalengland.org.uk.

APPENDIX C. Natural Resources Wales Update

For all follow up queries please email Sam Dyer at: sam.dyer@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

- Natur am Byth; NRW is the lead partner in this new project, which is similar to the 'Back from the Brink' project in England and Species on the Edge in Scotland. BCT and VWT are also key project partners and projects include focus on barbastelle and lesser horseshoe. The partnership has budgeted total project costs at £8m. The Project has secured development phase funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund, with the delivery phase application scheduled to be submitted in Feb 2023. £1.7m cash match funding has been secured from Natural Resources Wales, plus support from the Welsh Government.
- The results of NRW Protected Sites Baseline Evaluation Project have been published: Natural Resources Wales / Protected sites baseline assessment 2020. The project included desk-based assessments of the status of all bat SSSI and SAC features. NBMP data was essential to this process and following a review NRW is working with BCT to shape future NBMP outputs to aid with streamlining continuous site assessments. Discussion of how to improve any unfavourable sites continue.
- A research contract to review various aspects of non-maternity horseshoe roosts has been completed. The results will be used to inform guidance on mitigation requirements for non-maternity horseshoe roosts in Wales, once completed this will be published by NRW.
- State of Mammals in Wales New report shows highs and lows of mammal conservation in Wales – The Mammal Society; This standalone publication giving a Welsh specific summary of the 'Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals' Matthews et al. (2018) was launched late last year. Hard copies are available for free, please email cyhoeddiadCMN@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk to request a copy.
- NRW Web Accessibility Project continues and as part of this many areas of the website have been updated. This is a work in progress and linked NRW guidance is also being updated as required.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly limited practical/research projects that have been undertaken over the past 12 months but it is hoped that this will begin to ease where appropriate under IUCN updated Covid Guidance and in line with best practice. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage all bat workers, both consultants and voluntary to refresh themselves with appropriate best practice when working with bats in relation to Covid-19.
- NRW continue to work closely with the Non-Bitumen Coated Roofing Membranes Steering Group to progress this matter.
- NRW sit on the steering group for production of new CIEEM led Bat Mitigation Guidelines and the next edition of the Bat Survey Guidelines.
- NRW continue to contribute funding via JNCC for NBMP
- NRW continue to take an active role in Eurobats and other proposed new guidelines/publications regarding bats.

APPENDIX D. NatureScot Update

- NatureScot are pleased to continue to support the Scottish Bat Project and is providing financial support for another year (2021-2022)
- So far this year (2021) there have been over 200 calls to the Bats in Houses Helpline with 98 visits requested. This is a reduction from last year where there were 134 visits requested. We are still doing some things differently due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- The licensing team have remained extremely busy and so some of our bat workers have been continuing to take shifts on the 'bat phone' taking calls and giving advice
- Visits have remained external only.
- We have taken on two additional bat workers in the Glasgow area which has helped lighten the load on our existing bat workers in that area
- The Species on the Edge project is still in development and, working through BCT, there will be a focus on bat conservation on some of the islands and possibly certain mainland coastal sites as well
- The GB guidance on bats and wind turbines has been updated and published in HTML format on the NatureScot website.

APPENDIX E. Northern Ireland Environment Agency Update

BCT's Bat Workers Forum – NI Update by NI Environment Agency {NIEA} (an agency of Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs DAERA NI).

Funding and Research

NIEA have continued to fund through the DAERA Environment Fund stream, the research of Bat Conservation Ireland (BCI) have been collecting a long term data set for bats across the island of Ireland. Two key elements for Northern Ireland have been the Car-based bat monitoring scheme which is into its 17 year of running and Waterway survey which has been running for years in Ireland but since 2006 in NI.

Aughney, T., Roche, N. & Langton, S. (2021) Irish Bat Monitoring Schemes: Daubenton's Bat Waterway Survey & Car-based Bat Monitoring in Northern Ireland. Annual Report for 2020. www.batconservationireland.org.

Thankfully the covid pandemic hasn't impacted the data collection significantly.

Data analysis shows that the all-island trends show increases in two monitored species since the beginning of the survey in 2003 (common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle). Leisler's bat, which had initially increased, showed a peak in 2014 and has since fluctuated somewhat. Its more recent six year trend is stable or slightly increasing. In 2020 in Northern Ireland encounter rates for common pipistrelles (bat passes per hour) were lower than the island-wide average. Leisler's bat encounter rates were similar in Northern Ireland to the island-wide average, while Nathusius' pipistrelles were more frequent in NI squares. Nathusius' pipistrelles were recorded from four squares H13 (Fermanagh), H79 (Londonderry), J06 (Antrim), J33 (Down)

Despite some variation in yearly estimates, the all-Island Daubenton's bat trend appears to be fairly steady from year to year with error bars consistently encompassing the baseline. Trend analysis was also undertaken for Northern Ireland data only. Over the duration of the monitoring programme, there has been a significantly higher increase in the population trend for Daubenton's bats in Northern Ireland compared to the Republic of Ireland and compared to the All-Ireland data set.

Licensing

NIEA is the licensing authority and in the calendar year of 2020 we issued 170 bat related wildlife licences, which is about 31% of the wildlife licences issued by the team.

Covid shut down initially caused a stalling of the building trade and the activity of the environmental consultants, with very little activity in the spring survey window for internal roost checks. The late summer/autumn window was busy as the building trade restarted and then less impacted by the subsequent lock downs. The number of inspection licences in 2021 until 01 August was 86% of the total 2020 figures with the autumn survey season still to get under way so I would expect a greater number of the licences by the end of season.

We have also issued our first licence to hold bat carcasses for the purpose of training conservation detection dogs, the formation of the first full time detection dog team in NI this year.

APPENDIX F. BCT Update for Bat Workers Forum

1. Engaging with UK Parliaments

BCT continues to actively influence policy across three (UK Govt, Scotland, and Wales) of the four legislatures in the UK through our involvement on the relevant working groups of the country Links (Wildlife & Countryside Link (WCL), Wales Environment Link (WEL) and Scottish Environment Link (SEL) and Greener UK).

Key areas of work continue to be around the Environment Bill (Target setting, Biodiversity Net Gain, Nature Recovery Networks, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and proposed Environment Bill amendments including Species Conservation Strategies), and Land Use Planning (Planning Reforms white paper, Planning in Principle draft legislation).

We have also undertaken considerable work across the three legislatures and especially in Wales to address the gaps in policy around Environmental Principles and Governance that have arisen following the end of the Brexit Transition Period.

We have run successful campaigns to ask volunteers and supporters to get in touch with their local elected politicians to ask them to support a strong and effective Environment Bill. This includes an NGO-wide campaign to ask the UK Government to put into the Environment Bill, targets for species recovery and this attracted just under 208,500 signatures of support of which 2,112 came from BCT supporters.

Following the end of the last parliamentary session and the start of the new session, the Bat Habitats Regulations Bill has not made it back into the Private Members Bills.

Other areas of work include the 7th Quinquennial Review with JNCC which has attracted considerable comment from the NGO sector due to the new approach being proposed to select species for scheduling – currently bats will remain fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act because of their status as European Protected Species. There will be a public consultation on the final proposals in early autumn with submission to Government by the end of 2021. We continue to discuss with Natural England, Defra and with WCL, how species conservation can be delivered through Biodiversity Net Gain and the imperative need to consider core sustenance zones.

2. Earned Recognition

Bat Conservation Trust is working with Natural England and CIEEM on the pilot for a new transformative approach to licensing mitigation work in England that impacts on bats. This approach is known as Earned Recognition.

Applications for licences involving bats and bat roosts are by far the highest proportion of mitigation licence applications received by Natural England and numbers are increasing year on year. The vast majority are lower risk situations but they still need to be licensed which requires time, effort and cost on the part of the developer, the consultant and Natural England. This reduces the resources available for monitoring, enforcement and drawing together the evidence base for the effectiveness of mitigation. Natural England's resources to put into licensing are stretched and a more streamlined approach would have benefits for everyone.

We believe that an accreditation system would help to improve standards of bat mitigation and lead to better outcomes for bat conservation. Earned Recognition works on the basis of assessing and

accrediting a consultant's competence in undertaking survey work and designing effective mitigation so that, by using an accredited consultant, developers can experience a more streamlined licensing process for their scheme or project.

The competency requirements for consultants are being defined on the basis of relevant selected elements of CIEEM's Competency Framework (but a more detailed version with a bats emphasis) with the indicators of competence mapped across to BCT's Professional Training Standards. There will be different competency requirements based on the level of accreditation applied for which, in turn, relates to the degree of risk to bats and bat roosts from the projects that the accredited consultant will be able to work on. Quite simply, consultants who work on projects that involve higher risks to bats will require a higher level of accreditation that involves demonstrating a higher level of competence.

The Bat Earned Recognition Pilot is proceeding well. There are now 16 assessors in place (15 Assessors and 1 Moderator Assessor) - all highly experienced bat professionals keen to use their expertise to support delivery of this innovative trial scheme. Their training and accreditation testing is almost complete and scheduled for completion in early September 2021.

The Partnership has received an extremely high number of applicants to the invitation to take part in the pilot accreditation (which closed 15 August 2021) and the Project Team is in the process of identifying 100 individuals to participate over the coming months. Selection will be based on the need to make sure participants collectively cover the full range of geographic locations, species and proposed accreditation levels. These individuals will be informed of their successful applications in early September 2021, with assessment activities getting underway in mid-late September.

3. Wildlife Crime, Biodiversity & the Built Environment

Wildlife Crime. Between April 2020 and the end of March 2021 there were one hundred and twenty-five police related investigations into bat crime. This and previous records from the BCT wildlife crime project, has allowed the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU), to create an analytical tool on bat crime, using nine years of these records. This data tool allows police forces UK wide to identify bat crime hotspots within their regions with information on time, dates, and locations of offending.

The project continues to develop crime prevention measures to prevent bat crime through education, whether via the BCT website using 'position statements' or via the delivery of remote training. It has provided police training to Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Dorset, and Wiltshire police forces to date. The project also provides UK police forces with supportive advice and guidance on police investigations. Working with BCT, the Metropolitan Police achieved the highest known penalty against a housing developer for the loss of a roost at £600,000 in December 2020. Devonshire Police issued a police caution for 'disturbance of hibernating bats' in March 2021 against an individual who recorded himself stroking a torpid bat in a cave system whilst urban exploring.

The Project continues its strategic role within wildlife crime enforcement UK wide, and this is reflected in its position as the secretariat on the Bat Priority Delivery Group and on the CPS Community Panel, as well as its work with LINK. More recently the project has provided direction on bat related offences for the United Nations International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) as part of its assessment of UK Wildlife and Forestry Crime through situational analysis.

The project strives in partnership to protect these species and their habitats from those who commit offences against them whilst ensuring offenders do not benefit from their illegal actions in line with BCT conservation priorities.

Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines. In autumn 2020 updates to the 3rd edition of the survey guidelines were put on hold due to the need to divert capacity to the Earned Recognition Project. However, we are now able to return to this work with a view to publication in spring 2022.

Following our public consultation in spring 2020, the Technical Review Board attended meetings in summer 2020 to discuss tree surveys, major infrastructure projects, transect surveys and data analysis. The UK Bat Steering Group meeting in 2021 involved presentations and discussions on tree surveys for development. Subsequent meetings have been held to discuss major infrastructure projects and the use of thermal imaging and infra-red cameras on emergence and re-entry surveys. All of these topics will be updated in the 4th edition.

Bat Mitigation. Last year we published a paper in Conservation Evidence detailing the results of the Bearing Witness for Wildlife mitigation project, which ran from 2017 to 2019 (revisiting developments in England and Wales that were completed between 2006 and 2014 and involved common or soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bats, or any of the *Myotis* species). This can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3t4Ndi0>. What is clear from our project and from other mitigation projects is that the licensing system has the potential to collect data more effectively and close the feedback loop so that we can better understand and improve outcomes for bats.

In March 2021 there was a Mitigation Masterclass run by Jo Ferguson, BCT's Built Environment Manager which covered detailed workshops on heritage buildings, managing trees and an "Ecologists Anonymous" session lead by experts in their field; Chris Damant (Bernwood ECS Ltd.), Adam Curtis (Royal Parks) and Richard Crompton (Ecology on Demand) respectively. The proceedings document from this masterclass is currently being drafted for free download from the BCT website shortly.

Partnership for Biodiversity in Planning Project. This started in 2015 and involved 19 organisations from the conservation, biodiversity data, planning and development sectors working together to improve the consideration of biodiversity in planning. The project was funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and came to an end in March 2020. However, we are still maintaining the website and the key output from the project, which is the Wildlife Assessment Checklist, for a minimum of the next two years: <https://www.biodiversityinplanning.org/wildlife-assessment-check/>. Plantlife's Important Plant areas were updated in 2020.

The checklist is linked from the Planning Portal website and from the websites of some Local Planning Authorities. This is an interactive trigger list, which asks a developer a series of questions about their proposals and then directs them to commission an ecologist where relevant and provides a list of designated sites and species that may need to be considered before submitting a planning application. The tool was aimed at small and medium-sized developers with a view to triggering ecological input early on in development projects.

Roost Website & Roost Awards. The new Roost webpages were officially launched in September 2020 and can be found at: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/roost-replacement-and-enhancement>. The pages comprise of two main areas – the

first being the case studies pages show-casing bat roost mitigation and monitoring work with the Awards for best practice. The Roost Award 2021 was won on 10th March at an online ceremony following our Mitigation Masterclass, by Chris Damant for [Cliveden swarming roost mitigation work](#).

The second part of Roost is what we do with information we collect from research such as the Mitigation Project or industry feedback, we use to improve roosting opportunities for bats through our Roost Partnership scheme.

Roost Partnership. This is a unique conservation-lead built environment scheme between BCT and bat box or access product manufacturers; working together to provide bat conservation features that can be incorporated onto and into buildings and other structures that are designed with the latest best practice guidance and research knowledge in mind. The Roost Partnership does not endorse particular products but rather promotes the important working relationship between BCT and Partners in a common goal of improving roosting opportunities for bats within our built environment. The Roost Partnership also acts as an information sharing hub used to gather feedback from industry professionals to constantly improve our understanding of bat roosting requirements.

Our first partner is Green&Blue who manufacture bat blocks made from 75% recycled materials and designed with a bat ecologist near where they're based in Cornwall. Our second partner Just Lead manufacturers lead bat access tiles and has been honing their design with BCT's input. Details of both Partner's and links to buy their products can be found here: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/roost-replacement-and-enhancement/partnerships>. Jo Ferguson, BCT's Built Environment Manager, is in discussion with other potential partners.

Bats and lighting work. Jo Ferguson, BCT's Built Environment Manager, worked with the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) to publish the "Bats and Artificial lighting in the UK" guidance in September 2018. This was followed up with a technical symposium in 2019 and the publication of a proceedings document last year that details the case studies presented but also live polling we undertook at the event: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting>. Since the guidance note was published, more research has been carried out, including into low impact lighting types, so the steering group reconvened in July 2021 to begin the process of updating the 2018 guidance note. The steering group is made up of lighting engineers and designers, BCT (Jo) and ecologists well versed in lighting research. Data will be included in the new document from low impact lighting trials, which BCT has been involved in alongside Signify and Southampton and Sussex universities.

Non-bitumen roofing membranes. Non-Bitumen Roofing Membranes (formerly Breathable Roofing Membranes) currently are of a spun poly-bounded construction made up of long fibres, bats claws are sharp enough to pull these fibres loose, which entangle and ultimately kill bats. A steering group on the subject has been formed of BCT, SNCOs and academics from Reading and Leeds Universities.

In May 2020 the independent testing methodology paper was published in the Building Research and Information journal, detailing how to carry out a test to see whether a membrane might cause harm to bats from snagging. The methods paper is pay-for-view as it is a technical paper designed to be used by manufacturers rather than as background for ecologists (see: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/non-bitumen-coated-roofing-membranes>). Now the paper has been published, the steering group are helping publicise the methodology and arrange testing for manufacturers for membranes 'bat safety' through Leeds University. BCT have been promoting the paper's existence through our social media channel and

contacts. Jo has had two articles published in the industry magazine 'Roofing Today' highlighting the issue and as a call for positive action from roofing membrane manufacturers now we have this published testing methodology.

The TLX 'bat safe' breather membrane is still on the market. BCT are in discussions with them about their membrane test results and also the NBCRMs steering group is reviewing what this means in terms of advice the SNCO's can provide. All the latest updates for this are on the BCT NBCRMs webpage above.

Bat box sensor project. Jo Ferguson and Arup conservation technologists, electrical engineers and ecologists are working together looking to develop bat box sensor prototypes. We are currently at the proof-of-concept stage to discover if a sensor can be built that confirms bat occupancy remotely for ecologists.

4. National Bat Monitoring Programme & Related Projects

NBMP Annual Report 2020. This was published in May 2021 and can be found on the BCT website at: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/reports/nbmp-annual-report>.

NBMP Summer Surveys. The gradual easing of restrictions due to COVID-19 meant that participation in the summer surveys (roost counts, field, and waterway surveys) was less impacted in 2021 than in 2020. As some precautions are still necessary it is likely that the numbers of sites surveyed will not yet revert back to the usual levels. However, data returns so far have already exceeded the 2020 levels for the Roost Count and Field Survey, and data from more sites are still expected. The Waterway Survey only just finished for this year and therefore it is not yet possible to assess how participation compares to last year, but data returns so far look encouraging. The Sunset Survey has again proved popular this year with 249 volunteers carrying out 412 surveys (as of the start of September) compared with 244 volunteers carrying out 586 surveys in 2020.

NBMP Hibernation Surveys. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and following guidance from the IUCN Bat Steering Group (BSG), hibernation surveys for the NBMP were suspended in winter 2020/21. The latest guidance gives scope for surveys resuming again in winter 2021/22 with the necessary precautions in place. We are in the process of assessing the overall risk level and discussing if and how to go ahead and will communicate our position on this in the next few weeks.

The National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project – This project was also suspended during 2020 and 2021 following IUCN BSG guidance on trapping surveys. We hope to resume this project from spring 2022 and are meeting with Daniel Hargreaves in October in order to discuss next steps and review what this project has now achieved and priorities for ongoing surveys.

NBMP bat detector workshops. As in 2020, we were unable to run in person sessions due to COVID-19, so these workshops were again run online instead with 544 people attending across 14 workshops up to the start of September (two further sessions are running in September targeting younger and more ethnically diverse audiences). These sessions are proving so successful that we plan to run online workshops alongside in person workshops in future, as they provide training opportunities for people who are unable to get to one of our in-person workshops.

Forest Surveys: In 2019 we collaborated with Forestry England to undertake the Forestry England Bat Survey, a pilot in South-West England designed to monitor bat distribution and relative abundance in FE woodlands. This project used emerging passive acoustic technology, combined with AI-assisted species classification, and was amazing successful. The data collected were the largest, most comprehensive and attribute-rich dataset of woodland bat records ever compiled by the Bat Conservation Trust. We have repeated this pilot in summer 2021 to find out how bat activity in woodlands varies between years. We are also working with Forest Research to introduce bat monitoring into the National Forest Inventory using similar methods, with a pilot running in summer 2021 and a larger roll-out planned in 2022.

We are supporting RSPB and Bat Conservation Ireland to develop their own woodland bat surveys, and have published advice on using passive acoustics to survey bats in woodlands at <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/passive-acoustic-surveys/guidelines-for-passive-acoustic-surveys-of-bats-in-woodland>.

Nightwatch. Nightwatch is a free, inclusive, tech-enabled night-time biodiversity survey open to all regardless of background, experience, or physical ability. It has the dual aims of collecting robust, locally focused biodiversity data, while at the same time engaging a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds and abilities. Funding has been secured from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, JNCC and the Government Kickstart program to pilot Nightwatch this summer, initially targeting a limited number of urban areas. Credit-card sized 'AudioMoth' acoustic sensors were loaned to Nightwatchers to place in their window, garden or local green space, and sound recordings were classified using BCT's AI sound classification system. Alongside the use of an acoustic sensor, Nightwatchers also undertook a manual survey for approximately an hour after sunset to record other nocturnal species they see or hear. NightWatch will be rolled out across a larger area from 2022.

EchoHub: We will shortly be launching EchoHub, an open-source sound library focusing exclusively on bat sounds. It will feature recordings contributed by a community of professionals, researchers, educators, and anyone with an interest in bat bioacoustics. It will be free to share and download bat sounds on the portal. The goal of EchoHub is to make it easier to share and access recordings of bat sounds for diverse purposes such as scientific research, conservation, education, and the arts. EchoHub is an ongoing project which aims to collect recordings of all bat species of the British Isles and beyond, capturing a diversity of species, behaviour, recording equipment, and environmental conditions.

Bat monitoring on Jersey: In summer 2020 we partnered with the Government of Jersey to deliver the Jersey Bat Survey, a passive acoustic bat survey across Jersey. We are now working to analyse ten years of acoustic data from Jersey, and working with Jersey Bat Group and the Government of Jersey to advise on a comprehensive monitoring programme for the island that includes a variety of monitoring approaches.

Kate Barlow Award. The 2021 winner is Laura Torrent. Her project will provide one of the most thorough evaluations to date of the bat diversity of Equatorial Guinea, a hugely understudied region located in one of the most important biodiversity hotspots in Africa. To read more about Laura's project or details of the other Kate Barlow Award winners, see: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/awards/the-kate-barlow-award/the-barlow-award-winners> (where you can also see the final project reports of our previous winners). Our 2019 winner Benneth Obitte gave a fascinating talk

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about bat hunting and meat consumption in southern Nigeria at last September's National Bat Conference.

5. Other Projects

Bats in Churches Partnership Project (BiC). Capital works were undertaken at several project churches in England during 2020 and early 2021 despite COVID-19 restrictions. In June 2020 the Church Bat Detective Survey was launched, a sister survey to National Bats in Churches Study which was launched in 2019. The National Bats in Churches study is a random stratified sample of 1000 churches in England over four years (2019 to 2022) and these are our priority churches to survey. The Church Bat Detective survey however can be carried out at any other Church of England or Churches Conservation Trust church in England.

To date the study has records for over 300 churches! We have also created two e-learning courses online to help surveyors to carry out the surveys. The survey will continue next year between June-August. You can find out more about the surveys and sign-up to take part at:

<https://batsinchurches.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer-bat-survey/>

So far in 2021 we've held 17 online training events for a range of audiences (church, heritage and bat/wildlife focused audiences) and skill levels, reaching over 700 people and including a best practice forum for professional ecologists and church architects to share learnings from the project. We also held our first NBMP training session to help give people the skills and confidence to monitor a church roost long-term.

The BiC Project team produce regular updates via e-newsletters (you can sign-up to receive these via the bats and churches website at: <https://bit.ly/2Xoch3x>). We have also been producing a series of specific bat group updates for those groups that have expressed an interest in the project.

This autumn we plan to hold another series of free Bats in Churches LIVE webinars. Our spring series focused on topics such as bats and disease and myth busting the common worries and concerns that we've received from some churches. You can watch previous events here:

<https://batsinchurches.org.uk/get-involved/events/>.

Fascinating World of Woodland bats. This project which started in November 2019 and will run until November 2022, has three strands - Bechstein's bat – finding its limits, Bat Roost Tree Tag and the Woodland Symposium.

Bat Roost Tree Tag Scheme. The tree tags were completed in May and are now available to order. The primary purpose of the scheme is to ensure trees containing confirmed bat roosts are easily identifiable. The presence of a tag on a tree is well recognised by woodland workers and site managers, so providing a bat roost tree tag will bring clarity to those on the ground about those trees already identified as bat roosts. When a woodland operative sees a tag and their actions may impact the tree, they will know they need to seek appropriate advice before proceeding with any work. This will give a significantly increased level of protection for bat roosts in trees. Additionally, all tree roost and species records collected through the scheme will support current and future work studying bat's use of different tree species and roosting opportunities.

Information about the BRTTS was made available from June and can be found on the [BCT website](#). This was shared through the May Bat Group E- Bulletin. The web pages have the following information for those interested in taking part in the scheme:

- a Bat Roost Tree Tag guidance document

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- a briefing note for woodland owners and managers
- a tag order form
- record forms for the submission of tree roost and species records
- a landowner permission form
- privacy notices (for surveyors and landowners)

To date six bat roost tree tags have been purchased.

Bechstein's bat – finding its limits - For the Bechstein's bat project, we plan to continue to improve our understanding of the Bechstein's bat use of atypical landscape. Last year [guidance](#) from BCT, Defra and IUCN COVID-19 was released recommending that activities involving the handling of bats should be postponed until further notice, due to the low risk of passing the COVID-19 virus (SARS-CoV-2) from humans to bats. Taking on board this guidance as well as Covid-19 restrictions, the project decided to cancel all fieldwork planned for the 2020 survey season.

For the 2021 survey season, following the current [IUCN guidance](#), made available in July, the risk was assessed and fieldwork in Dorset went ahead during the last week of July following good field hygiene and disinfection procedure with the appropriate PPE. Trapping surveys were carried out by the Dorset Bat Group over three nights in areas we haven't trapped previously but no Bechstein's bats were caught. The rest of the field work in Somerset and Dorset will now take place during 2022 (the last year of the project), during the early summer period and the late summer period.

Woodland Symposium – Further information about the Woodland Symposium can be found under Conference and Training.

Back from the Brink Project. We have reported previously on progress with the BCT elements of this multi-taxa HLF financed project. BCT is involved with five project areas and are lead partner for the Grey Long-Eared Bat project. Back from the Brink (BftB) is now in its final months. We are in the process of final reporting for the grey long-eared bat project, and it is very pleasing to report that we have exceeded all our targets bar one. These includes engagement with landowners, restoration of habitats to benefit this species and our work with local communities and volunteers. Monitoring roosts has been problematic, but we have just managed to achieve what was necessary. When it comes to habitat improvements, we are reflecting our experience of the willingness of landowners to do the right thing for this species without financial recompense. We are also talking to Natural England about the difficulties for some smaller landowners in not being easily eligible or practical for them to utilise Countryside Stewardship agreements. In addition, the all-important grassland options are not necessarily available for those in mid-tier. At the same time, we are talking to NE about the importance of maintaining the current bespoke consideration of bat species as the new scheme is developed.

With regard the other four project areas BCT is involved with: Roots of Rockingham (Woodland), Limestone's Living Legacies (Cotswolds) Dorset Heath and Ancients of the Future as the projects come to an end, in the last few months progress has continued a pace with acoustic data being analysed and final events, site visits being held, and reports being written. BCT also delivered online landowner workshops and volunteer training, including five online cross tax workshops for the Ancient of the Future project and three online workshops for the Roots of Rockingham Project covering sound analysis and survey refresher sessions for volunteers. Some recordings and PDFs can be found on the [Back from the Brink website](#). Working with the Dorset Bat Group, we collated our findings from three radiotracking studies and produced a report looking at the habitat requirements

of Bechstein's bats in the Dorset Heaths, and a standalone local landowner's guidance document for the BftB Adding Diversity to Dorset Heaths project. All these have been shared with the landowners.

The grey long-eared bat project was due to finish at the end of August, and we have successfully secured an extension into mid-November to allow the best outcomes for the final season of seeding sites for grassland restoration and also for maximising acoustic data availability through increased capacity for analysis.

Return of the true Night Rider. This project is a partnership with the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and acts as a legacy of the Back from the Brink grey long-eared bat project. This project is now halfway through its period of delivery and is extending the reach of our work on this species from East Devon into Dorset. BCT input is focussing on delivery with land managers, with engagement with local communities being the other key strand. We have a strong steering group and progress is well on schedule with a great deal of enthusiasm being shown for the aims of the project.

Valuing ecosystem services provided by UK bats under climate change. Last September saw the start of this PhD by Penelope Fialas. At this time Orly Razgour (University of Southampton) and Carol Williams (BCT) hosted a climate change stakeholder day based on Orly's research on 'Climate Change and Woodland Bats'. It was a very successful event with 25 invited policy and practitioners attending, presenting and contributing to discussions. There was a climate change panel discussion and workshop at National Conference in September. In May a follow-up stakeholder meeting was held to tie down management recommendations and a policy brief. Good progress was made and, with input from all stakeholders, these documents should be completed in time for sharing these in a workshop at the National Bat Conference.

Species on the Edge. The Rethink Nature partnership* along with NatureScot, have developed a multi-year project with funding provided by National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for their Species on the Edge (SotE) project. This project in Scotland presents a new way of working, enhancing collaboration between organisations through multi-species work plans delivered by a shared resource. Nurturing collaborations with communities, SotE will safeguard a suite of nationally and internationally important species, encourage new skills, inspire and re-connect people with nature to foster an inter-dependency of community and species conservation action. We are currently in the development year with submission for the delivery stage due in November. Our project development officer (Rachael Cooper-Bohannon) has been working with project partners across all areas but with a key focus for bats on Skye and the Inner Hebrides.

Natur am Byth. The Rethink Nature Partnership*, alongside the Marine Conservation Society, Vincent Wildlife Trust and Natural Resources Wales have recently heard that the bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for the development phase of this project has been successful. This partnership project has the same ethos as Back from the Brink and Species on the Edge and will see a collaboration across a number of areas in Wales with a focus on species recovery but also on community involvement. BCT will have a key focus on the lesser horseshoe bats on the Gower and the potential isolation they face due to the urban infrastructure, especially lighting, that forms so much of the landward boundary with the rest of Wales. We will also be reaching out to urban communities.

*The Rethink Nature Partnership is a group of leading species conservation organisations working together to catalyse the action that species need. The organisations are Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Buglife, Butterfly

Conservation, Plantlife, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Bat Conservation Trust.

6. Conferences & Training

As a result of the pandemic, we learnt a lot about organising online events and will continue to offer courses and events online (e.g. our new 6 session online course [British bats, their ecology and conservation](#)) as well as returning to in person training courses where we can safely do so.

Big Bat Skills Event Online. We held this event for the first time last year (over two days in May, as an extension of the Scottish Spring into Action day, and was attended by 300 people from across the UK and further afield). The event was so successful that we held a one day Big Bat Skills event this year (on 12th February). More details are available online at: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/conferences-symposia/big-bat-skills-event-online> but this is likely to become a regular part of BCT's annual events programme.

National Bat Conference 2020. A cornerstone of the annual bat workers calendar, this event was held online for the first-time last September and incorporated some interesting panel discussions on Climate Change and Equality, diversity and inclusion which provided lots of food for thought. It featured the launch of the new BCT Events app. This year the conference is also being held online, this time over Halloween. See BCT website for the programme and booking details: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/conferences-symposia/national-bat-conference> The plan is to move to a hybrid format in the future.

BatFest. Following the success of last year's BatFest, we are repeating BatFest in September, this time as part of our 30th birthday celebrations. There are a series of online events throughout September to offer people different ways to engage with bats and develop their knowledge and skills. The full programme can be found [here](#).

Woodland Symposium 2020. The symposium was adapted for online delivery for 2020 and ran over two days. 207 delegates attended of which eleven were students who won student bursaries funded by the Back from the Brink Project (BftB). To make up for the lack of in-person interaction, we provided discussion panels and specific networking sessions using breakout rooms. The three-panel discussions covered current topics of interest - Climate Change and Conservation (with a presentation from Dr Orly Razgour on her work on Forest Bats and Climate Change); Working in Collaboration with BftB; and Drivers of Change covering infrastructure projects, tree planting, woodland creation, and tree diseases. More information about the Symposium can be found [here](#) and on our [BatChat podcast](#).

Mitigation Masterclass. Having taken place in the afternoon of 10th March, the workshop style Masterclass offered the opportunity to join bat roost mitigation experts exploring topics such as historic buildings, churches, and trees. Culminating in an Ecologists Anonymous session to see what lessons can be learnt which proved very popular and will be reappearing at the National Bat Conference on Friday 29th October.

English Regional Conferences 2021. The North of England Regional Conference 2021 and the South West of England Regional Conference 2021 were held as virtual events this year, both trialling a new two-workshop format which was well received. The virtual format also enables people from other regions to join online if they want to and we plan to trial hybrid conferences from Spring 2022 to bring together the best of in-person with all we have learned about virtual conferences. More details to follow in due course.

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7. Helpline

Staffing – The Helpline team currently consists of 10 members of staff. The team includes: two Managers, four Senior Bat Advisors, and four Seasonal Bat Advisors. Our Seasonal Bat Advisors started in early May and will be finishing in October.

Helpline call volume – Between January and August 2021 we have received around 8,131 enquiries (4,203 via the BCT Volunteer Bat Care Helpline). Around 1,773 of these enquiries were related to Natural England’s free advice service and around 5,372 were related to bat care.

Volunteer Bat Care Helpline (previously OOH) – The 2021 service began on Monday 17th May and ended on the 12th of September. The Volunteer Bat Care Helpline operated from 6pm-10pm on weekdays and 10am-10pm weekends and bank holidays. The project was expanded this summer and volunteers also took bat care-related calls during office hours from 9:30am to 4:30pm. This new pilot project has been extended and volunteers will continue to take these calls over the winter. And we’re currently recruiting volunteers for that service so if you’re interested in getting involved, do have a look on our website for details. BCT provide back-up staff support for each shift. As of the end of August, 4352 enquiries have come through the service, of which 1600 were from OOH and 2560 from IOH.

The BCT UK Bat Care Network – The network now has 259 registered carers, ambulance drivers, hospitals, and regional helplines. 8 new carers and 11 ambulance drivers have been added so far in 2021.

Monthly breakdown of call volumes – Figure 1 below provides the breakdown of the enquiries outlined above by month; this includes Volunteer Bat Care Helpline calls. Figure 2 shows the proportion of enquiries that came through the VBCH service in 2021.

Figure 1

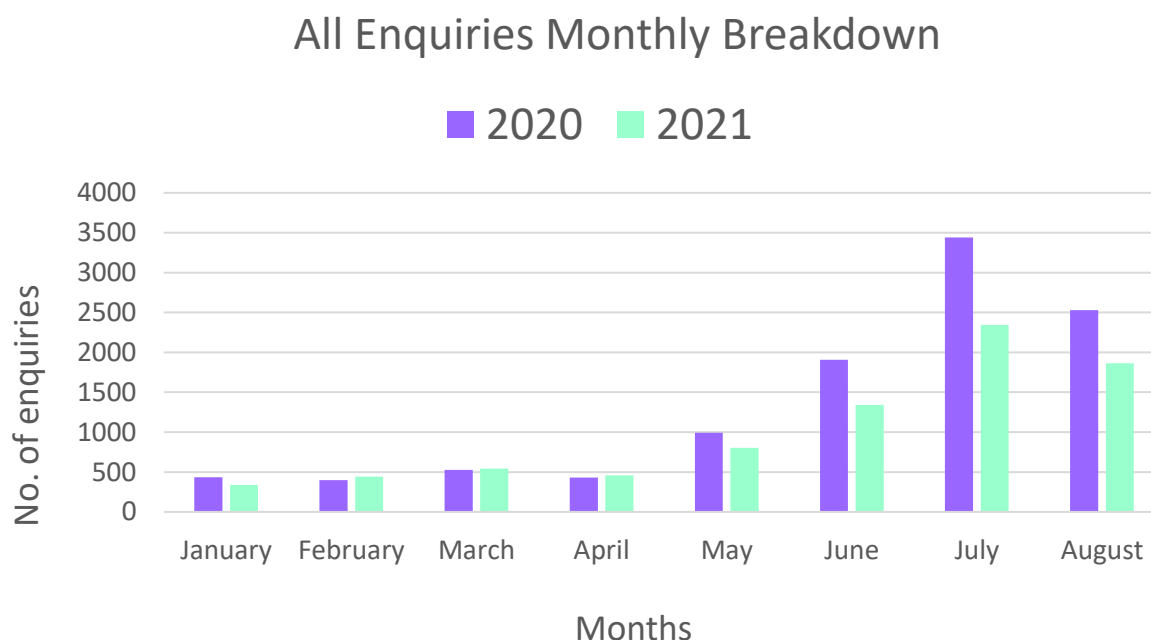
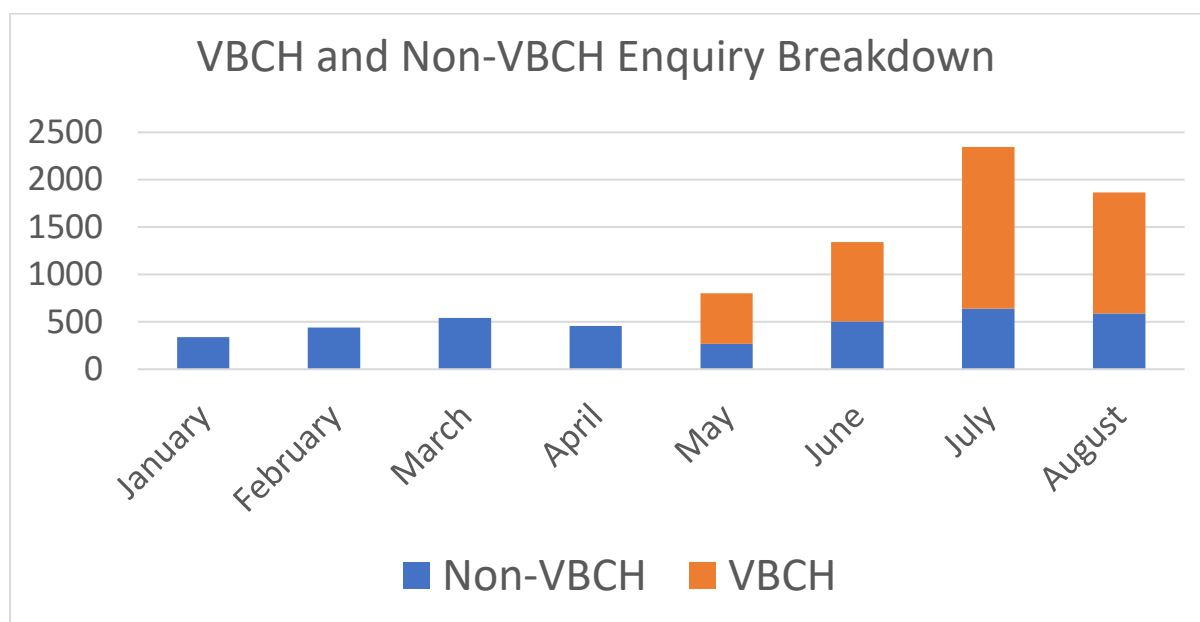


Figure 2



8. Bats & Diseases

COVID-19 and bats. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the disease COVID-19, is becoming endemic in the human population. Alongside this we now know that several other mammal species are also susceptible to infection with SARS-CoV-2 and that there have been cases where infected animals have transmitted the virus to other animals through direct contact. However, there haven't been any confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection in bats outside of experimental work with Egyptian fruit bats. (Another study with big brown bats found they were not susceptible to infection.) We simply do not know the susceptibility of any other bat species to SARS-CoV-2 outside of these two experiments and some theoretical modelling work. This means anyone undertaking activities that involve direct contact with bats need to continue to take appropriate precautions to minimize the risk of human to bat transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

We have contributed to revisions to international guidance for bat field work, bat rehabilitation and caving, through the IUCN Bat Steering Group (BSG), available on the [IUCN BSG website](#). The latest guidance and information was shared in August with bat groups via a [special edition bulletin](#), and with bat rehabilitators via the [Bat Carers Bulletin blog](#).

Our COVID-19 work is ongoing, existing BCT guidance for bat carers is being reviewed, and we are working with Imperial College London and the Animal & Plant Health Agency on testing of bats that have been in contact with people who have COVID-19. We are also reviewing the content of the bats and [COVID-19 FAQs on our website](#).

European Bat Lyssaviruses (EBLV). At the time of writing we have been notified of one new case of EBLV-2. This is in line with expectations we often have cases in the autumn. We are waiting on confirmation of species ID and then we'll update bat groups and bat carers via a bulletin. This case is an important reminder that anyone who handles bats continues to wear gloves of an appropriate thickness to prevent bites getting through, that anyone regularly handling bats has pre-exposure

vaccinations, and that anyone bitten, licked, nibbled or scratched by a bat, of any species, should seek prompt medical advice (even if they are already vaccinated).

We have created a new web page on [rabies pre-exposure vaccinations](#), that aims to provide bat volunteers and bat workers with information about pre-exposure rabies vaccination in the UK, reflecting the range of enquiries we receive at BCT. (The page is based on a special edition bulletin that was shared with bat groups and bat rehabilitators last summer.) We will be looking to add to this over the autumn with more information about rabies antibody testing.

Dead bat packs. Thank you to everyone who submits dead bats to the [Animal & Plant Health Agency \(APHA\) passive surveillance scheme](#). APHA have renewed their contract with BCT for support of the passive rabies surveillance scheme, including sending out dead bat packs to member of the public and bat workers. Please see the [online dead bat pack request form](#) if you have a bat to submit.

Creation of the UK Health Security Agency. We reported at the 2020 Bat Worker Forum that Public Health England (PHE) is being replaced by a new organisation, the National Institute for Health Protection. However, although this was expected to be in place back in the spring, there have been delays and a renaming. The new organisation is the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and its responsibilities include the health protection functions of PHE. It is expected that functions, staff, assets, and funding will transfer from PHE by the end of October. PHE had previously confirmed that the services currently provided by them (inc. rabies vaccine for people who regularly handle bats in an entirely voluntary capacity) will be delivered by the new organisation when it is up and running.

For more information about the strategic remit of the UKHSA see the [GOV.UK website](#).

9. Membership, Communications and Education

Membership. We currently have:

- Almost 5000 members
- 86 Life members
- 32 Corporate members
- 618 Adopt a bat subscribers

Social Media Outreach. Social media provides an easily accessible way of engaging with large audiences and is a rapidly growing primary source of information for most people. We have a strong and increasing following with numbers on Facebook over 126,000, Twitter almost 53,000, Instagram over 23,500 and LinkedIn over 6,200.

News Stories. We have published a total of 25 stories on our website in 2021, covering a variety of topics ranging from updates on BCT's biodiversity policy and advocacy work (e.g. State of Nature, the Quinquennial Review and a number of consultations) through to the launch of the NBMP 2020 Report . We encourage and welcome blogs from a variety of people and have continued to engage with a variety of journalists from TV, radio and print media.

Magazines and e-Bulletins. Bat News and The Young Batworker go out to members three times a year. The Spring 2021 was a special issue focusing on climate change and the summer issue will be

all about celebrating BCT's 30th Anniversary. Adopt a Bat subscribers receive a specialised update twice a year. The free bat e-Bulletin is sent regularly to over 2,800 subscribers and is available on our website, and the corporate e-Bulletin (also sent regularly) is sent to 100 subscribers.

Species Champions. In England, we have three MP species champions for the common pipistrelle, noctule and brown long-eared bat; in Wales where there are two species champions in the Welsh Assembly for the lesser and greater horseshoe bats; and in Scotland we are currently in the process of recruiting species champions, now referred to as nature champions. We are delighted to also announce the wonderful English folk singing star, Kate Rusby, as our first Ambassador

Public Engagement. We continue to produce and distribute a number of different information leaflets as well as targeted reports such as the State of UK Bats, Bat Crime report and the National Bat Helpline report. We have seven pin badge designs available (common pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, noctule, lesser horseshoe bat, barbastelle, Bechstein's bat and Daubenton's bat) which are widely used both as an engagement and fundraising tool. We have produced 2 seasons of our podcast [BatChat](#) which contains 23 episodes which have been played or downloaded 23,627 times. The most popular episodes have been 'Bats and coronavirus' (1,581 downloads) and 'the past, present and future of bat conservation with Shirley Thompson' (1,530 downloads). BCT has also been increasingly exploring ways to fundraise digitally and encourage other to raise funds for bat conservation too; this includes setting up fundraising pages on Facebook, taking up a challenge for bats (e.g. London Marathon), live streaming games online, shopping online, etc.

Advocacy. There is a lot of work happening on the advocacy front as the government is reviewing much of the legislation that has the potential to impact bat conservation. Our focus has been on the Environment Bill and planning regulation but we have also been looking at factors such as the Quinquennial Review that determines which species warrant the highest protection. Our advocacy work has continued to be highly collaborative with NGO's and via umbrella groups such as the countryside links. One large collaborative campaign with Wildlife and Countryside Link collected a total of 208,498 signatures calling for conservation targets in the Environment Bill, 2,112 signatures came from BCT supporters – thank you! Despite government amendments for targets to be incorporated, there are now reports that the Environment Bill will be delayed for a fourth time which has significant impacts in the creation of the critically important the Office of Environmental Protection. We are current recruiting for a Species Policy Specialist, since Steve Lucas, our current Policy Specialist will be retiring soon.

- END -

APPENDIX G. Questions sent in via BWF Booking Form

Records

Priority raised: *It was mentioned in e-mail correspondence that BCT would be preparing guidelines for the classification and verification of records on iRecord to ensure a consistent approach. Is there any progress on this?*

Response from BCT's Head of Science and Monitoring, Katherine Boughey and Bat Groups Officer, Abby Packham: Due to time and resources constraints other projects have taken priority, however this is still something we are working to progress. We are currently advertising for a Research Scientist, our hope is that this new position will work with stakeholders to co-create guidelines for biological recording standards for bat monitoring and professional survey data, which would include automated classification from acoustic recordings, and the use of platforms like iRecord for submission, validation and verification of records.

Habitat protection

Priority raised: *We have recently noticed that the JNCC criteria for establishing SSSIs do not include Myotis alcathoe. As the UK population of this species currently seems centred on Surrey and West Sussex, which are under intense development pressure, is it not essential that appropriate SSSIs are established to protect the species before it is too late?*

Response from Natural England's Senior Mammal Specialist, Katherine Walsh: It is likely that this species continues to be underrepresented in any data due to its ecology and being mis-identified. Whilst the species does appear to be 'well recorded' in Sussex, there are a number of records much further north i.e. Yorkshire. There needs to be a greater understanding of the distribution of this species across GB. Currently, we do not have an understanding of what the population size may be for this species.

The species, as with all bat species, continues to receive high levels of protection through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Guidance

Priority raised: *The response to the question about the new survey guidelines raised last year indicated that only relatively minor changes were being made, mainly in relation to trees. We made some detailed comments at the consultation stage and are very disappointed that the issues we raised may not be addressed. We see a lot of evidence of poor practice with overuse of "professional judgement" and exploitation of loopholes and we are anxious to see these closed.*

Response from BCT's Head of Biodiversity, Jan Collins: The survey guidelines update has been delayed (due to the need to divert resources to the Earned Recognition Project) and is now being picked up again. The most significant changes are likely to be in relation to trees, but we are also looking at other changes, including a new chapter on major/phased projects. All of the consultation comments will be considered when carrying out the update.

Getting started

Priority raised: *Useful starting info for new volunteers, best personal bat detection equipment.*

Response from BCT's Bat Groups Officer, Abby Packham: For those new to the batty world we recommend using our extensive webpages to learn more about bats through pages such as www.bats.org.uk/about-bats, which also includes a section on [bat detectors](#). For those looking to volunteer there a variety of options, such as joining the [National Bat Monitoring Programme](#) which has surveys for every level and supports volunteers with loan equipment, also joining their [local bat group](#) or volunteering to help field calls for the [National Bat Helpline](#). BCT also offer a range of talks and workshops throughout the year, such as the NBMP Using your Ears workshops, and introductory talks during national and regional conferences.

Bats and their environment

Priority raised: *I'm very interested in Bats and Arboriculture and any changes to this industry, or in guidelines for aerial tree surveys for bats etc.*

Response from BCT's Woodland Officer, Sonia Reveley: We will be publishing the 4th edition of Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines in spring 2022, with some changes to the recommendations around surveying trees for bats for professional ecologists (including categorisation of trees and the use of aerial inspections). Guidance for arboriculturalists may need to be updated to align with this and we will approach the relevant bodies in due course. BCT does provides [Lantra-accredited courses](#), developed by the Bat Conservation Trust and supported by the Arboricultural Association. The training will enable participants to carry out tree works with consideration for the potential effects on bats and their habitats.

Priority raised: *Climate change and changing bat activity times. Bats utilising 'sub-optimal' or even seemingly not suitable roosts and consideration of wider effects on development sites that seem to be being 'ignored' (e.g. commuting paths, foraging areas, demand for lighting, noise within converted buildings on roosts (e.g. children's rock'n'roll bedrooms or wedding venues below a bat loft-roost)).*

Response from BCT's Director of Conservation, Carol Williams: BCT has been supporting research into the effects of climate change on bats and focused our 30th anniversary edition of BatNews on this topic, sharing studies from across the world. We also ran a panel on this subject at last year's National Bat Conference and a workshop led by the researcher Dr Orly Razgour. It is planned to hold a follow-on workshop on this topic at this year's conference. We are working with Orly to take key messages of her findings to policy makers and statutory bodies. We are also keeping an eye on this within the UK, monitoring changes in species' ranges. With regard to development, our Built Environment Manager is always looking for ways to improve available habitats for bats, for example through the [Roost](#) partnership scheme. We published our [findings on bat mitigation](#) and our [lighting guidelines](#) on our website. BCT also monitors potential changes to legislation that may affect legal bat protection, and campaign to ensure as much protection as possible. You can read about our latest efforts regarding the 7th Quinquennial review on the [website](#).

Bat care training

Priority raised: *Is it possible to have a centralised training from the BCT for bat care? With a bat care course run once (or however many times) a year for prospective carers (put forward by bat groups) to ensure everybody gets the same current information and to take some pressure and responsibility off carers to do all the training. Prospective carers can get practical experience with a carer local to them/from their bat group. When the training, practical and rabies is 'signed off', then be registered. The rabies jab could be a requirement before doing the course to show commitment. Would it be effective to have a national social media campaign calling for carers that are already in the animal care industry and/or already had their rabies jab? Getting the rabies jab seems to be tricky and has deterred people from continuing. With more carers and carers not needing to do the bulk load of the training this may help retain carers that stop due to burn out from holding down a job, bat care work at all hours and trying to find the time to train trainees.*

Response from BCT's Bat Care Coordinator, Laura Brown; Training & Conferences Manager, Naomi Webster; and Head of Conservation Services, Lisa Worledge: We are delighted to announce that we will be running, in conjunction with Maggie Brown of West Yorkshire Bat Hospital, an online bat care training course across November and December (five sessions), covering the following: introduction to bat care, rescue and transport, assessment and treatment, equipment and short-term husbandry including COVID-19 and rabies infection control, and release, monitoring and euthanasia. There will be three optional sessions in the New Year on babies, horseshoe bats, and a veterinary special. Details of the costs and how to book will be available on the BCT website shortly.

Depending on the response we get to this course, we will consider running it again, possibly even annually if there is sufficient demand. We are very aware that it can be difficult for people, especially in remoter areas or those where there are currently few bat carers, to get access to the training they need. We hope this course will help fill that gap and compliment the training that is already offered by some bat groups and bat carers across the UK.

As part of BatFest this year Maggie Brown is also leading a session on bat care for non-carers. This aims to provide tips on what to do if someone finds a grounded or injured bat, how to keep themselves and the bat safe, emergency first aid and how to get expert help. The response to this workshop has been incredible with over 80 people booked to attend.

We also plan to organise a bat care mingle online this autumn where both new carers and existing members of the BCT Bat Care Network can come together to network and help new carers understand who they can go to for help.

We have resources to encourage participation in bat care, including a leaflet aimed a new carers 'involved', which is great for events, and further information, including ['Rehabilitation basics'](#) on our ['Resources for bat carers'](#).

In relation to the requirement for rabies vaccinations whilst someone is training to be a carer, Public Health England (PHE) will not provide free vaccinations for volunteers unless they are regularly handling bats. This means that where someone is about to start being trained in bat handling as a volunteer (e.g. as a trainee bat carer or in another capacity e.g. bat box checking or trapping) then PHE's approach is that vaccinations should not be required provided people are wearing gloves, closely supervised and should anyone be bitten (which gloves and close supervision should minimise the risk of) they seek post exposure treatment asap.

Once someone is in a position to start handling bats without close supervision and will be handling bats regularly, then they should be vaccinated (and if they are a volunteer and not undertaking paid bat work, they will be able to get free vaccinations). Please see the information on our web page on [‘rabies pre-exposure vaccinations’](#) for more information.

APPENDIX H. Web links and comments recorded in the Zoom chat box

Agenda Item	Comment / web link
News from Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations	Lisa shared the email address for VBRVs to contact Natural England bat volunteer team: batvolunteers@naturalengland.org.uk. Abby shared the email address to request a hard copy of the State of Mammals in Wales new report: cyhoeddiadCMN@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk. Gail Armstrong requested further information about what support NE are offering to get lapsed and removed VBRVS back on to the list. How active are they in contacting people to encourage them to get back onto the network? Getting to point where active VBRVs are hanging by a thread and don't know how much longer can hang on. This was seconded by many in the meeting, throughout the country. Gail also wanted BCT to investigate differences highlighted in advice on rabies vaccinations between bat carer trainees and VBRVs and raise this with NE's Julie Harwood.
BCT Update	Ross Baker asked: can you elaborate on the Bechstein's project that Carol mentioned? Carol Williams replied in chat: the Bechstein's bat project is building on the colonies found using 'atypical' habitats in Dorset. This was to continue in the area originally looked at under the Dorset Heaths project as part of Back from the Brink. It also extends into Somerset I hope that is helpful. Ross: Thanks, that explains it. Jean Matthews asked: We seem to have had a lot of enquiries directly to the group from people that haven't been able to get through to the Helpline, especially in August. I don't know if this has been due to bad weather coinciding with juveniles starting to fly and a general increase in groundings or if the Helpline capacity has been reduced? Sophie Dennis replied: thanks for your questions, we will certainly ask these and let you know when we have answers. Lisa Worledge answered verbally that there have been reduced seasonal staff this year but that has been more than made up for by the Volunteer Bat Care Helpline service. However, there does remain some limitation to the Helpline. Links shared in the Zoom chat: The Roost web pages can be found at: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/roost-replacement-and-enhancement And details about the Roost Partnership are online at: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/roost-replacement-and-enhancement/partnerships If you have 2021 (or earlier!) NBMP data to submit you can do this online at: https://nbmp.bats.org.uk/Membership/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fSurveys.aspx (NBMP login details required).

Agenda Item	Comment / web link
	See details of upcoming NBMP workshops on the BCT website at: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/workshops You can help us collect reference calls for EchoHub! Please see the BCT website for more information: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/passive-acoustic-surveys/collection-of-bat-reference-calls Read more about the latest winner of the Kate Barlow Award (made in honour of the late Dr Kate Barlow, a good friend to a number of us at this Forum) at: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/awards/the-kate-barlow-award/the-barlow-award-winners Find out more about the Bats in Churches project, sign-up for the regular updates, find out about online training and the wonderful BIC webinars at: https://batsinchurches.org.uk The Bat Roost Tree Tag Scheme details are on the BCT website at: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/landscapes-for-bats/bats-and-woodland/bat-roost-tree-tag-scheme Please do take a look at the range of training that BCT can offer: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/training-and-conferences Details of National Bat Conference are on the website at: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/conferences-symposia/national-bat-conference You can sign-up to the Bat eBulletin and the Corporate eBulletin from the box on the right of our website home page: https://www.bats.org.uk Rabies pre-exposure vaccination page is at: https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/bats-and-disease/bats-and-disease-in-the-uk/rabies-vaccine please do let Lisa know if you have any comments on this (email lworledge@bats.org.uk) For details of BCT leaflets and other publications see: https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/publications-and-leaflets You can click on the facebook, twitter, Instagram and blogspot logos on our website home page, at the top and bottom right, to follow us on those sites. The wonderful BatChat podcast can be found on our website at: https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/batchat-the-bat-conservation-trust-podcast (and is available from all good podcast apps!)
Consultation of handling of bat care calls	Steve Parker asked is it considered that there may be a risk to the viability of the Bat Care Network if funding continues to drop, even with the potential new options? Lisa Worledge replied: Maintaining the Bat Care Network is a core activity for BCT but the issue is the volume of bat care calls. We continue to have a Bat Care Coordinator and it is our intention to maintain that role. All posts at BCT are subject to continued funding of course. However, there is more that we would like to do and we continue to seek funding to support the

Agenda Item	Comment / web link
	Bat Care Network alongside the consultation around the handling of bat care calls.
AOB	Gail congratulated Steve for his retirement and say: cannot believe you're ready for retirement, I remember you as a bright young thing. If anyone has any videos or interesting projects they would like to be displayed at the National Bat Conference, please email Naomi: nwebster@bats.org.uk. If you would like to write a piece for British Island Bats, please email Lisa and Tina Wiffen: britishislandsbats@gmail.com. Volumes 1 and 2 is hosted on BCT's website and can be found here: https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/accessing-journal-papers/british-islands-bats