

Volunteer Bat Roost Visitor Training Syllabus

This syllabus is to be used as a checklist for both the trainee volunteer bat roost visitor (VBRV) and the trainer.

Subject	Heading	What should VBRVs know/be able to do?	Skill?	Training/resources
Legislation & licensing	Basic protection	- Describe the protection afforded to bats in England - Explain the wider context of UK wildlife legislation concerning bats and related advice - Explain how the law regarding bats is administered in England	Knowledge	- Reading – BWM update handout, BCT website and bats and the law leaflet - Training course attendance – Bat biology/ecology courses (bat group, BCT, FSC, Wildlife trust), Powerpoint presentation by trainer/bat group - Questions on legislation (page 15 course notes) - Questions on licensing (page 17 course notes) - Law scenarios (course notes)
	Defences	Explain the defences under which householders can seek advice	Knowledge	- Reading – BWM update handout, BCT website and bats and the law leaflet - Training Powerpoint presentation by trainer/bat group - Questions on legislation (page 15 course notes) - Questions on licensing (page 17 course notes) - Law scenarios (course notes)
	Licensable activities Licences for VBRV's Licences for others	- Differentiate between activities that require a licence and activities that do not - Describe the purposes of the different licences relating to bats and restrictions	Knowledge	- Reading – BWM update handout, BCT website and bats and the law leaflet - Training Powerpoint presentation by trainer/bat group - Questions on legislation (page 15 course notes) - Questions on licensing (page 17 course notes) - Law scenarios (course notes) - NE module– class licensing*
	Role of bat workers	- Describe the NE system of advice and the role of the VBRVs - Understand the role of VBRVs in different situations - Understand the conditions associated with the VBRV licence	Knowledge	- NE module – role of the VBRV - NE module– class licensing* - Roost visit examples Powerpoint - VBRV Role Powerpoint - Case studies examples (course notes) - The roost visit service – a guide (course notes)
Bat biology and ecology	Basic biology - Taxonomy - Relationship with other mammals - Characteristics of families - Physical adaptations for flight - Physiological specialisations - Senses	- Describe the families and species represented in the UK - Describe adaptations to flight - Explain bat energetics and torpor - Explain echolocation and the importance of sight and hearing to bats	Knowledge	- Reading – see recommended reading list, BWM, General bat book (e.g. John Altringham, Phil Richardson, Christian Dietz), BCT website and leaflets - Questions on bat biology and ecology (page 13 course notes)
	Basic ecology - Importance in ecosystems - Life histories - Lifespan - Breeding - Food and feeding - Seasonality	- Describe the role that bats play within the wider ecosystem - Describe the life cycle of a bat in the UK - Describe how long bats typically live for - Describe when mating takes place in UK bats - Define a roost - Explain the need of bats to feed - Recall the types of food taken by bats - Explain the differing requirements of bats at different times of years	Knowledge	- Reading – BWM, General bat book (e.g. John Altringham, Phil Richardson, Christian Dietz), BCT website and leaflets - Questions on bat biology and ecology (page 13 course notes) - Training course attendance – Bat biology/ecology courses (bat group, BCT, FSC, Wildlife trust), Powerpoint presentation by trainer/bat group
	Social behaviour - Colony formation and composition - Mating systems and behaviour - Maternal behaviour - Juvenile behaviour	- Describe mating strategies - Explain the maternal cycle - Describe the optimum conditions needed for maternity roosts - Describe changing feeding patterns of female bats from pregnancy to lactation - Describe the behaviour of baby and juvenile bats from birth to independence	Knowledge	- Reading – BWM, General bat book (e.g. John Altringham, Phil Richardson, Christian Dietz), BCT website and leaflets - Questions on bat biology and ecology (page 13 course notes) - Training course attendance – Bat biology/ecology courses (bat group, BCT, FSC, Wildlife trust), Powerpoint presentation by trainer/bat group

Subject	Heading	What should VBRVs know/be able to do?	Skill?	Training/resources
Bat biology and ecology cont.	Habitat selection - Roosting - Range of roost sites - Seasonal changes in site selection	- Identify the different types and common locations of bat roosts - Explain roost composition - Explain how roost selection is dependent on time of year, roost composition, sex and species - List the favoured roosting sites of key bat species associated with domestic properties	Knowledge	- Reading – BWM, General bat book (e.g. John Altringham, Phil Richardson, Christian Dietz), BCT website and leaflets - Questions on bat biology and ecology (page 13 course notes) - Training course attendance – Bat biology/ecology courses (bat group, BCT, FSC, Wildlife trust), Powerpoint presentation by trainer/bat group - Roost visits - What to expect – the bat/bat workers year (course notes)
	Feeding - Range of feeding habits - Diurnal rhythms in feeding behaviour	- Describe where and when most feeding takes place - Explain feeding techniques used by different bat species - Recognise that certain species of bats have favourite feeding habitats linked to food or physical design	Knowledge	- Reading – BWM, General bat book (e.g. John Altringham, Phil Richardson, Christian Dietz), BCT website and leaflets - Questions on bat biology and ecology (page 13 course notes) - Training course attendance – Bat biology/ecology courses (bat group, BCT, FSC, Wildlife trust), Powerpoint presentation by trainer/bat group
Bat conservation	- Threats to bats - Historical evidence - Current threats - Pesticides - Persecution & Intolerance - Sensitivity of bats to disturbance	- Explain why bats need to be protected - Describe the differing geographical range of bats in the UK and the factors affecting this - Describe historical declines - Explain past and current threats to bats and their roosts: - Habitat change/loss - Loss of hibernacula - Loss of summer roosting sites - Effects of modern farming - Loss of insects - Pesticides - Remedial timber treatment - Agricultural pesticides - Persecution and intolerance - Sensitivity of bats to disturbance - Threats in winter - Threats in summer	Knowledge	- Reading – BWM, General bat book (e.g. John Altringham, Phil Richardson, Christian Dietz), BCT website and leaflets - Training course attendance – Bat biology/ecology courses (bat group, BCT, FSC, Wildlife trust), Powerpoint presentation by trainer/bat group
Public relations	Site visits - Visits to householders who have discovered bats - Visits to buildings requiring works which may affect bats	- Effectively communicate with a range of audiences including householders, church wardens, builders, pest controllers, etc. - Recognise how and when to communicate verbally - Analyse the situation and work to address the reason for the roost visit - Use persuasion and education to resolve an issue where relevant - Show sensitivity to roost owners' fears and/or phobias - Deal with difficult individuals/situations	People	- Roost visits - Reading - BWM - Experience with/become a bat carer and get used to speaking to general public - Training course attendance – Powerpoint presentation by trainer/bat group on Promoting bats to the public - Volunteer for BCT OOH service or bat group helpline - Bat group public events – e.g. bat group stands at fayres, bat walks, etc. - Give a talk on bats to a local group/bat group, etc - Role plays/mock visits - NE H&S module – Dealing with Violence & Aggression at Work

Subject	Heading	What should VBRVs know/be able to do?	Skill?	Training/resources
Public relations cont	Advice - Issues with bats - Works required	- Describe standard recommendations for different roost visit types where there are issues with bats: - Bats in living areas - Smell, droppings - Noise - Fear/phobia - Provide recommendations on how to manage existing roosts (e.g. where there are problems with bats in living areas, smell, noise, fear etc) - Describe standard NE advice for different roost visit types where works are required: - Building repairs (including roofing work, soffit replacements, etc) - Pest control - Timber treatment - Provide recommendations on how to carry out works in a way that minimises potential impacts to bats and their roost and disturbance can be avoided (e.g. situations such as building works, pest control, timber treatment, etc)	Knowledge	- Roost visits - Reading – BWM - NE module – Standard timings module (note there are other advice modules to come)* - Case studies examples (course notes) - Roost visit example presentation - Role plays - Mock visits
	Churches	Understand church processes and specific issues regarding bats and churches	Knowledge	- Roost visit - Arranging a church survey (course notes) - Surveying a church checklist (course notes) - Reading – BCT website, www.batsandchurches.org.uk, www.churchcare.co.uk
	Exclusions	Explain the exclusion process and understand the role of the VBRV in exclusions/potential exclusion visits	Knowledge	- NE module – exclusion module* - Roost visits - Discussion with trainer - Forms and FAQ's provided by helpline to homeowner - Reading – BWM (for methods)
Practical methods	Handling and examining bats - Catching - Handling - Examining - Identification	- Safely and competently handle bats - Identify a live or dead bat from its physical characteristics - Differentiate between sexes, age classes and reproductive states - Identify situations where hand net use is appropriate and use a hand net to catch bats with acceptable disturbance	Knowledge	- Training with local bat carers - Bat group projects – where there is trapping/handling - Suitable roost for a catching (with handnet) training night - Training course attendance – Bat ID courses (bat group, BCT, FSC, Wildlife trust, conference workshops) - Reading – bat ID guides e.g. FSC, Dietz, etc
	Surveying for bats	- Identify bats in the field by sight (in a roost) and echolocation - Locate sites and structures used by bats as roosts or hibernacula - Understand when and how to use an endoscope on a roost visit - Identify where and when in the site the bats roost, the likely species involved and assess the likely impacts	Knowledge	- Roost visits - The bits that bats leave behind presentation - Other bat group projects and surveys - Training – BCT, NBMP, FSC etc courses - NE module– how to use an endoscope module* - Bat droppings guide (from BCT) - Bat droppings guide (course notes)

Subject	Heading	What should VBRVs know/be able to do?	Skill?	Training/resources
Role and responsibilities	The role of the volunteer bat roost visitor	- Describe the type of structures and visits that are included in the roost visit service - Explain the role of different parties in the roost visit process (e.g. NE, BCT, trainers). - Be able to represent NE on official roost visits - Organise and lead roost visits confidently and competently - Record information in standard formats - Liaise with the Bat Conservation Trust/NE where relevant - Produce clear and concise written reports regarding the findings and subsequent recommendations of a survey - Understand how the information provided in a report is used by BCT/NE to provide an advice letter. - Describe (with diagrams if necessary) built structures, their construction and usage	Admin/organisation	- NE module– the role of the VBRV module - Bat Advice Service contract summary (link in Induction Pack) - Roost visits - Role plays/mock visits - Completing draft of RRF, provided copy of NE advice letters produced from roost visits - Representing the bat group at events with the general public - Submitting records/information to bat group/local records centre/NBN - Reading – BWM (appendix for built structure terms and diagrams) - The roost visit service – a guide (course notes) - Reading - the Volunteering Promise and associated FAQ (induction pack)
	H&S in bat work - Safety at roosts and other sites - Health and first aid - Travel, and night or lone working - Safety in and around buildings/structures required for roost visits	- Explain why health and safety issues are important - Recognise the need for risk assessments - Understand self-insurance as a NE volunteer - Apply health and safety appropriate to the circumstances including use of ladders, structure access, lone working, near-hit and accident reporting - Recognise the risks associated with European Bat Lyssavirus (EBLV) and demonstrate best practice with regards to bat handling	Admin/organisation	- NE H&S module – Asbestos - NE H&S module – Risk management - NE H&S module – Dealing with Violence & Aggression at Work - NE H&S module – Working at heights - Reading – BCT website for zoonoses information - Reading - Natural England introductory pack and Batline newsletters - Roost visits - Reading - current risk assessment, Technical Information Notes, and relevant section of RRF - Reading – Operational Health & Safety Guidelines for VBRV's - Role plays/scenarios

***The NE modules are currently under development and when available will be communicated.**