

Bat Conservation Trust



Annual Review

1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018



Greater horseshoe bat, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*

Review by the Chair and Chief Executive



The future of wildlife legislation is a bit of an unknown at the moment, so over the last year we have concentrated on strengthening our existing partnerships as well as forging new ones to ensure that we maintain or improve current protections. To raise awareness of the benefits of bats to people, we held a bat event at the House of Lords. The need for advocacy in all the UK parliaments has never been higher which is why Steve Lucas has taken on the role of part-time Policy and Legislation Specialist.

We were pleased to welcome Liz Ferrell as our new Scottish Officer. Liz takes over from Anne Youngman who retired after 14 years with BCT. Liz will be working with the NBMP team to pilot aspects of the new British Bat Survey. Our work supporting bat groups in the whole of Great Britain is an important role for BCT: bat groups are crucial to bat conservation and enable us to take opportunities as they arise and meet new challenges by working in partnership.

Just like bat groups, the National Bat Helpline continues to play a crucial role in raising awareness of bats and, as our president recently stated, it is difficult to see how we would have made the significant gains to bat conservation without it. It is supported in its work by Natural England volunteer bat roost visitors, Out of Hours volunteers and a network of volunteer bat carers. While on the topic of bat care, it was a real privilege to attend the second bat care conference this year. This provided a great platform to both share ideas and experiences as well as celebrating everyone involved in bat care across the UK.

The Bats in Churches project is another great example of our collaborative approach. We have been working closely with the Church of England, Historic England, Natural England and the Churches Conservation Trust to mitigate issues caused by large bat roosts in some churches. The first phase of the project has included working with three pilot churches. We now need to build on what has already been achieved so a further application for funding will be submitted this year.

Our collaborations have extended even further to work with key sectors including ecological consultants, the construction industry, forestry and planners. This synergistic approach has enabled us to deliver programmes to improve awareness, knowledge and action that benefit bat conservation. We will continue to work in collaboration with others to improve the evidence base for bats and find practical solutions to issues that may affect them. We need to continue to highlight the importance of bats to people; their role in our health and well-being and their crucial role in ecosystems services. We will do this through projects such as Back from the Brink.

It has been a pleasure to work alongside Julia Hanmer, Joint CEO, to help develop these collaborations. This makes it particularly poignant that Julia has left BCT after 20 years with us. Julia has made a huge contribution to bat conservation and to the development of BCT. She will be greatly missed but has left a solid legacy for us to build on.

Hopefully Julia will be able to come along to the National Bat Conference 2018 which is returning after a year off. We're looking forward to the conference this year as well as launching our new improved website. Over half a million people have visited our current website and the aim is to build further on this with a website fit for mobile devices.

We're going to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to all our staff, many volunteers, partners, supporters, donors and all those who have fundraised for bats this year. We would not be able to achieve what we do for bat conservation without your help and support, and look forward to working with you in the coming year.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'D Gibbons'.

Dr David Gibbons, Chair

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Kit Stoner'.

Kit Stoner, Chief Executive



Chris Packham President's message

Spring was shy to arrive this year and consequently so was much of our beautiful wildlife, including the soprano pipistrelles, Natterer's bats and serotines that regularly visit my garden. But as I write this, spring is in full swing and bats are back. Little do they know the challenges and changes BCT has been facing while they were hibernating.

However, with change comes opportunity. In BCT's case, the opportunity to build on previous successes and maximise the benefit to bats and people. And that is why all of BCT, including its volunteers, supporters and members continue to work as tirelessly as ever to protect and speak up for bats.

Wildlife crime is still a seldom mentioned threat affecting bat populations and yet, as highlighted by the first ever UK wildlife crime report, is still a clear and present danger for British bats and other wildlife. BCT's Bearing Witness for Wildlife Project will continue to address this issue by working alongside law enforcement across the UK and raising awareness of wildlife crime.

Now more than ever collaborations seem to be the way forward to get all British wildlife through the times of change that we are facing. The Partnership for Biodiversity in Planning is an example of a unique collaboration of developer, planning and ecological expertise; this BCT led project will be launching an online tool this year which will provide an indication of whether proposed developments are likely to affect protected and priority species and if ecological expert advice should be sought.

The British Bat Survey is a new way of monitoring bats being tested via the National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP) and is another partnership project; this new survey will utilise the latest technological developments to make it a more interactive and engaging user experience. If you have not done so already I would urge you to take part in any of the existing NBMP surveys. The data collected by NBMP volunteers are incredibly valuable and allow everyone to see how our bat populations are faring (plus going out on bat surveys is a lot of fun!). It's thanks to the effort of over 1,000 volunteers that allowed the publication of the State of the UK Bats 2017. The report (downloadable from the BCT website) suggests we continue to see signs of a possible recovery in some species, although we still have a long way to go before bats recover from the massive decline in their populations in the last century.

However, one species in particular isn't doing so well in the UK. The grey long-eared bat has an estimated population of just 1,000 individuals, all restricted to the south-west of the UK. Fortunately the species is part of one of the most ambitious collaborative projects – namely, Back from the Brink. This project aims to save 20 species of animal, plant and fungi from extinction while helping hundreds of others. What an exciting endeavour!

I hope this very brief summary convinced you there is also hope in change and that by joining me and BCT you too can make a positive and significant change for bats.

Chris Packham, President, Bat Conservation Trust

Discover

National Bat Monitoring Programme

The NBMP has been **running since 1996**

It relies on a nationwide network of citizen scientists. In 2017 a **total of 1,858 sites** were surveyed by **929 volunteers**



26 bat detector workshops were held, providing training for over 300 volunteer surveyors

The data form part of the next UK Biodiversity Indicators report to be published in July 2018.

NBMP data contributed to

a range of research and peer-reviewed publications, including 'Monitoring the biodiversity of regions: key principles and possible pitfalls' in *Biological Conservation*; and '**The State of UK's bats 2017**'



The data are being used in **three PhD studies**

Looking ahead: In 2017 we have been working on developing a new survey for the NBMP, the British Bat Survey (BBatS) in collaboration with the British Trust for Ornithology. This will enable us to calculate population trends for more bat species than is currently possible and engage a wider range of volunteers than ever before.



Vincent Weir Award

Jeremy Froidevaux of the University of Bristol won the award in 2017 for his work in furthering our understanding of bats in forests and agricultural landscapes.



Jeremy's work has uncovered the mechanisms driving recent population increases in greater horseshoe bats in the UK, emphasised the importance of canopy gaps for foraging bats, and highlighted how novel imaging methods (LiDAR) can be used to assess bat habitats and quantify forest suitability remotely.

Kate Barlow Award

Kristen Lear (PhD candidate at the University of Georgia) is the first recipient of the Kate Barlow Award. Her research focuses on conserving the endangered Mexican long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris nivalis*).



This species is a rare but vital pollinator, classified as endangered by the IUCN due to **drastic declines of over 50%** in the past 10 years – a decline expected to continue without immediate conservation action. The second winner of the award was announced in April 2018.



Act

Biodiversity

1,122 copies of Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 2nd edition have been sold and thousands of copies downloaded.



BCT has contributed to new bats and wind farm guidance as part of a group led by Scottish Natural Heritage; we are now awaiting publication. BCT continues to sit on the Intersessional Working Group on bats and wind turbines for EUROBATS.

The Grey Long-eared Bat Project,

as part of 'Back from the Brink', is working with landowners to improve foraging and connectivity around maternity roosts for this species.



The Partnership for Biodiversity in Planning: Led by BCT and funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, project

activities over the past year have been focused on the development of the web-based planning tool/**Interactive Trigger List**. The working prototype that we have developed for bats is being extended to the other protected and priority species that will be included within the planning tool.

Investigations

195 allegations of bat crime

with 164 referrals having been made to the Police. 12 cases led to offenders being cautioned, subjected to community resolution measures or warned.

33 cases are still being investigated.



There have been **four prosecutions for bat crime** during the past twelve months. In two of these cases the Crown Court has been asked to consider confiscation of profit made as a consequence of offending.

Policy and consultations

BCT is an active member of Wildlife and Countryside Link (WCL), Wales Environment Link (WEL) and Scottish Environment Link (SEL) signing up to consultation responses, briefings, statements, papers

and reports on legislation, planning, crime, Brexit, the **25 Year Plan** and other relevant subjects.

In February 2018 BCT organised an event at the House of Lords on Bats and People.

Built Environment

BCT continues to work to improve awareness, knowledge and action for bat conservation with the built environment sector.



This year has seen significant progress in the updating and production of guidance in relation to the **impacts of artificial lighting**.

The Habitat bat box partnership scheme will now sit within a new partnership scheme called **Roost** so that we can open up opportunities to a greater variety of bat box and bat access product manufacturers to work with us.

Bats and Woodland

We are working on completing the final Swanton Novers report and producing guidance for woodland managers and volunteers.



The BCT collaboration with Forest Research 'Putting UK Woodland Bats on the Map' recruited four bat groups to pilot an acoustic survey methodology for monitoring bats in woodlands.

BCT will be working with Forestry Commission to deliver a series of **European Protected Species** (EPS) training throughout England that is specifically targeted towards woodland owners, agents and contractors.

Bats and Churches

BCT continues to work to develop the Bats in Churches partnership project. It has been working with three pilot churches to carry out in-depth ecological surveys and seek solutions to mitigate issues caused by large bat roosts. Ecologists carried out surveys at a further 100 churches.



A Stage 2 funding bid to Heritage Lottery Fund will be submitted in June 2018.

Inspire

Helpline



The National Bat Helpline is open **between 9.30am and 4.30pm on weekdays all year round**, with an 'Out of Hours' service provided during the summer by trained volunteers.

The National Bat Helpline fielded a total of **15,133 enquiries** in 2017-18.

Helpline organised over 1,000 roost visits in England on behalf of Natural England. We also answered a further 3,811 Natural England enquiries which did not require a visit.

Helpline provided immediate welfare advice about grounded and injured bats and put callers into contact with **around 350** local volunteer bat care experts and regional helplines who comprise the National Bat Care Network, which is co-ordinated by the Helpline.



Training



BCT delivered 26 training courses in 2017-18 for a combined audience of **377 people**.

This year we offered two new courses 'Bearing Witness for Wildlife' offering training in recognising and reporting wildlife crime or acting as a witness and 'Kaleidoscope Pro' delivered in collaboration with Wildlife Acoustics.

BCT co-organised the **Autumn Swarming Bat Conference** with the Vincent Wildlife Trust and the Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group. This took place in September and was attended by **100 bat enthusiasts** from across the country and overseas.

We also co-organised the third National Bat Care Conference in February with Maggie Brown from West Yorkshire Bat Hospital and Bat Care News. The event was **attended by 77 people**.

Championing Bats

The Bat Conservation Trust has a **total of 6,351 members**. That includes the support of 39 corporate members.

Over 110,000 likes on Facebook.



Close to **40,000 followers on twitter.**



Our **Instagram account**, created in June 2016, has over **7,500 followers**.



We **posted 35 news stories** directly onto the BCT website and 21 blogs from a range of bat enthusiasts.

Education

The teachers and youth leaders membership currently has **88 subscribers** who receive an education pack and *The Young Batworker* magazine three times a year.



A specific teacher's pack for Wales has been developed and is expected to be distributed to Welsh schools later in 2018.



BCT in Scotland

Over 450 people have taken part in events and training days cross Scotland.

Over 100 delegates attended the 2017 Scottish conference.

Anne Youngman retired after 14 years as our Scottish Bat Officer. This contribution was acknowledged through the RSPB's Nature of Scotland **Lifetime Achievement Award**.

Liz Ferrell is now our new officer continuing the work of the Scottish Bat Project.



The **12 bat groups in Scotland** continue to undertake surveys and deliver outreach activities throughout the country.



BCT in Wales

We work alongside **250 volunteers** in 15 bat groups across Wales.

The **Wales Bat Conference** took place at Swansea University in June with an excellent breadth of presentations from bat groups and academics.

We will build on the successes of the previous year and expand on further activities relating to both Brexit and the developing strategies for the Nature Recovery Action Plan throughout 2018/19.

Bat Group Support

UK, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man
Bat groups are at the forefront of bat conservation in the UK and remain at the core of BCT. We have a formal relationship with **88 Bat Groups**, of which **69 are Partner Groups** and **19 Network Groups**.

BCT provides support to bat groups including talks, training, outreach materials (e.g. leaflets), insurance, etc. as well as some financial support through the Partner Group Support Fund (with awards for this year totalling £1,445 for projects and support to attend the Autumn Bat Swarming Conference).



Looking ahead: we are seeking to better support bat groups as well as showcasing the wonderful work being done locally throughout the British Isles.

Pete Guest Award

A **total of 12 bat workers** (including three joint nominations) were nominated in 2017 and we received over 200 votes.

The 2017 winners were **Donna and Graham Street** from the Isle of Wight. They were nominated for their dedication to bat conservation through 20+ years of running the Isle of Wight Bat Hospital, all their bat care and rehabilitation work along, with the many education and engagement activities they undertake every year to inspire people about bats.



BCT in Europe and Internationally

Following the development of a high level international strategy in 16/17, BCT took a strategic decision to focus on UK work in the past year, and revisit the international strategy in future years. However, BCT continued to engage with the EUROBATs Agreement.



BatLife Europe

As a founding partner of BatLife Europe (which now has 36 NGO partners), BCT has supported this initiative since its creation.

During the past year, BatLife Europe has registered as a Stichting Foundation in the Netherlands. Projects this year have included preparing an update of a pan-European indicator to which BCT has contributed data, providing support to partner organisations, and choosing and promoting new **Bat of the Year (lesser horseshoe bat)**, which BCT has promoted to UK bat groups and via social media.

Summarised financial statements and auditors' report

Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2018

	Endowment	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2018 Total £	2017 Total £
Income					
<i>Income from generated funds</i>					
Donations and legacies	-	19,612	240,326	259,938	373,644
Investment income	-	-	59,831	59,831	51,420
<i>Income from charitable activities:</i>					
Conferences income	-	-	35,947	35,947	103,448
Training courses and meetings	-	-	54,613	54,613	65,986
Projects and research	-	581,751	484,517	1,066,268	937,462
Other activities	-	-	51,276	51,276	52,089
Total income	-	601,363	926,510	1,527,873	1,584,049
Expenditure					
<i>Expenditure on raising funds</i>					
Membership support	-	-	58,609	58,609	57,181
Costs of raising funds	12,994	-	97,268	110,262	108,364
	12,994	-	155,877	168,871	165,545
<i>Expenditure on charitable activities</i>					
National Conference	-	-	-	-	80,569
Biodiversity training courses and regional conferences	-	-	90,259	90,259	68,985
Project and research costs	-	642,938	623,080	1,266,018	1,021,750
Total expenditure	12,994	642,938	869,216	1,525,148	1,336,849
Net income before net gains on investments	(12,994)	(41,575)	57,294	2,725	247,200
Net gains on investments	(15,780)	-	64,737	48,957	291,682
Net income for the year	(28,774)	(41,575)	122,031	51,682	538,882
Transfers between funds	(12,106)	12,106	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	(40,880)	(29,469)	122,031	51,682	538,882
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	2,101,550	413,875	782,933	3,298,358	2,759,476
Total funds carried forward	2,060,670	384,406	904,964	3,350,040	3,298,358

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 15 to the financial statements.

Balance sheet – as at 31 March 2018

	2018 £	2018 £	2017 £	2017 £
Non-current assets				
Fixed assets		2,145		-
Intangible assets		84,484		-
Investments		2,761,223		2,724,326
		2,847,852		2,724,326
Current assets				
Assets held for sale	155,000		100,000	
Debtors	167,025		207,159	
Short term deposit	105,647		136,099	
Cash at bank and in hand	183,752		211,758	
	611,424		655,016	
Creditors: amounts due within one year	(109,236)		(80,984)	
Net current assets		502,188		574,032
Net assets		3,350,040		3,298,358
Reserves				
Endowment funds		2,060,670		2,101,550
Restricted funds		384,406		413,875
Unrestricted funds				
General funds		796,854		614,082
Designated funds		108,110		168,851
Total funds		3,350,040		3,298,358

Included in the reserves above are unrealised gains of £249,655 (2017: £285,874).

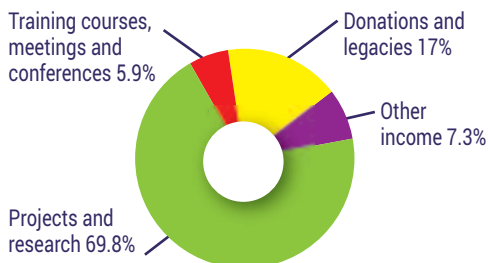
Sayer Vincent LLP was re-appointed as the charitable company's auditor during the year and has expressed its willingness to continue in that capacity.

The report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Trustees on 25 June 2018 and signed on their behalf by

Dr David Gibbons
Chair

Incoming resources £1,527,873



Treasurer's report

BCT had a reasonably strong year financially in FY17/18 despite challenges relating to statutory funding. Income from trusts and grants, donations and legacies, alongside continued careful control of expenditure, has resulted in a positive year end picture. For the year ended 31 March 2018 income was £1,527,873 (2017: £1,584,049) and expenditure was £1,525,148 (2017: £1,336,849), leading to net income for the year of £2,725 (2017: Net income of £247,200). Taking into account gains on investments of £48,957 (2017: gains of £291,682) the net movement in funds for the year was an increase of £51,682 (2017: an increase of £538,882).

Investment policy – Investments total £2,761,223 (2017: £2,724,326) at 31 March 2018. The aim of these funds is to provide a steady additional annual income stream to support our work, helping to reduce the risks associated with our reliance on project funding. This year our investments performed strongly in the first three quarters of the year, but dropped in the final quarter of the year in line with general market conditions. For budgeting purposes BCT assume a 6% total return per year to take into account market fluctuations.

Reserves policy – We adopt a risk-based approach for our reserves policy in order to define the amount we need to

Resources expended £1,525,148



enable us to sustain our operations and protect us from unforeseen events. We have also been investing some of our reserves in strategic projects to secure BCT's long term financial viability. At the end of the 2017/18 financial year our total reserves stand at £3,350,040 (2017: £3,298,358). Of this, £2,060,670 (2017: £2,101,550) are endowment funds and £384,406 (2017: £413,875) are restricted funds for projects. This leaves unrestricted funds of £904,964 (2017: £782,933) of which £108,110 (2016: £168,851) have been designated to key programmes of work in the next financial year (see notes to the accounts for details). This leaves us with £796,854 (2017: £614,082) as unrestricted, unallocated funds. The trustees' policy is to work towards holding six months operating costs, approximately £760,000, in unrestricted reserves. The level of unrestricted reserves currently slightly exceeds this target, which means we can face any medium term financial uncertainty with a good degree of confidence. We will continue to review our reserves policy and our progress against it each year.

On behalf of BCT, I would like to thank all our members, donors and partners for their fantastic support and our volunteers and staff for their endless hard work on behalf of bat conservation.

Tom Andrews, Treasurer

WHO'S WHO:

President – Chris Packham.

Vice Presidents – Professor Paul Racey, John Burton and Dr. Robert Stebbings.

Patron – David Gower OBE

Trustees:

Dr. David Gibbons, *Chair*
Sarah Escott, *Vice Chair*

Tom Andrews, *Treasurer*

Steve Markham, *Hon Secretary*

Annika Binet (Partner Bat Group Nominated Trustee) (from Nov 2017)

Bob Cornes (Partner Bat Group Nominated Trustee)

Dr. Abigail Entwistle, Rupert Lancaster, Roger Mortlock, Professor Kirsty Park, Steve Parker (Partner Bat Group Nominated Trustee), Professor Robert Upex

Thank you

We would like to thank all our members and friends who have made donations during the past year. We do not have the space to name everyone individually; however, we would like to thank everyone for their greatly valued support without which none of our work would be possible.

Charitable Trusts, Statutory Bodies and Other Organisations

Animal and Plant Health Agency
Chapman Charitable Trust
C James Cadbury Trust
Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust
Clark Bradbury Charitable Trust
Defra
Dolly Knowles Charitable Trust
Edith Murphy Foundation
Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Forest Research
Garfield Weston Foundation
Helen A Gillman's Trust
Heritage Lottery Fund
Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Maldwyn Williams Charitable Trust
Margaret Joan Tottle Deceased Will Trust
Marsh Christian Trust
Martin Wills Wildlife Maintenance Trust
Natural England
Natural Resources Wales
Oakdale Trust
Pilkington General Fund
Robert O Curle Charitable Trust
Russell and Mary Foreman 1980 Charitable
Scottish Forestry Trust
Scottish Natural Heritage
The Anthony and Noreen Daniel Charitable Trust
The Barry Green Memorial Fund
The Bourne-May Charitable Trust
The J & J R Wilson Trust

The Late Miss Eileen Margaret Tyler Charitable Trust
The Leonard And Suzanne Phillips Foundation
The Mary Heap Charitable Trust
The Reeve Charitable Trust
The Roger And Sarah Bancroft Clark Charitable Trust
The Roger Vere Foundation
The William Dean Countryside And Educational Trust
Walker 597 Animal Trust
Waterloo Foundation
Woodland Trust

Legacies

Rev Wendy Aird
Betty M Defazio
Mrs June Dutton

Sponsorships

(of £100 or more)

ARUP
Atkins
Auritus Wildlife Consultancy
Ecosurv/Habibat
Elekon AG
Forticrete
Greenwood Ecohabitats
NatureCounters (BioMotors Ltd)
Pettersson Elektronik AB
Titley scientific
Wildlife Acoustics, Inc.
Wildsurveys Ltd

Corporate Members

(as of 1st April 2018)

Absolute Ecology
Arbtech Consulting Ltd
Asw Ecology
Barn Hill Ecology
Batability Courses & Tuition
Big Domain
Cleankill Environmental Services Ltd
Continental Landscapes Ltd

Denbies Wine Estate Limited
Dorset County Council
Echoes Ecology Ltd
Ecological Survey & Assessment Ltd
English Heritage
Ground Control Ltd
Highland Titles
Hipper.com
Historic England
Holidaycottages.co.uk
Ingencia
Just Mammals Consultancy LLP
Kates Clothing Ltd
Marquis & Lord Ltd
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Peersonic Ltd
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Teign Trees & Landscapes SW Ltd
The Nestbox Company Ltd
Titley Scientific
Treework Ltd
United Environmental Services Ltd
Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd
Wealden Heartwood
Whitcher Wildlife Ltd
Wilby Tree Surgeons
Wildcare

Donations from Bat Groups

(of £100 or more as of 1st April 2018)

Bedfordshire Bat Group
Fife and Kinross Bat Group
Hampshire Bat Group
Oxfordshire Bat Group
South Lancashire Bat Group
South Yorkshire Bat Group
Surrey Bat Group
Surrey Bat Group
Tayside Bat Group
Warwickshire Bat Group

Photographers: BCT would like to thank all the photographers who so kindly donated their photographs during the year.

Cover image: Dale Sutton

Auditor: Sayer Vincent LLP

Designed by: Matthew Ward



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