

Reporting a wildlife crime



Any information about wildlife crime should be passed immediately to the PSNI*. Call 101.

Describe your call as a potential Wildlife Crime and try and relay the following if known:

- Give details of the (potential) crime.
- Location and time.
- Ask for & retain an incident reference number.

Criminal activity can be intentional, reckless or opportunistic. Reporting suspicious activities may not immediately lead to an arrest, but can help build a picture that later leads to successful enforcement action. Reporting even the smallest pieces of information can be useful in protecting NI's wildlife.

Further information is available in the NIEA's booklet "Wildlife Law and You (2016)" or visit www.wildlifecrimeni.org

*Information can also be given anonymously via Crimestoppers.



www.wildlifecrimeni.org

What is PAW NI?

The Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime NI (PAW NI) brings together statutory agencies, non-statutory agencies and interested parties with the common goal of combating wildlife crime through publicity, education and campaigning. PAW NI partners include key government Departments, PSNI and other enforcement agencies, environmental organisations, animal welfare groups and country sports associations.



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Northern Ireland Bat Group

The Northern Ireland Bat Group was formed in 1985, the year when bats first achieved protected status.

The Group's members, who come from all walks of life, share a common interest in bats and their conservation. The bat group carries out a number of activities including: providing advice to councils, businesses and individuals; recording and collating bat records across Northern Ireland; delivering bat talks and events; cooperating in bat conservation and research projects; rescue and rehabilitation of grounded bats. www.bats-ni.org.uk



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L Campbell/NIEA



www.wildlifecrimeni.org



H Clark/BCT

BATS



Bat facts

There are eight species of bats in Northern Ireland and they frequent most areas of the country. Bats do not build nests, but can live in buildings, walls, bridges, trees or caves etc. Northern Ireland's bats eat insects such as moths and midges, so are important pest controllers. All bats in the UK and Ireland hibernate during the winter months often unseen. Bats do not get tangled in your hair. This is only a myth. The only reason a bat may fly close to you is to feed on the midges that surround you.



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Bats and the law

All bats species and their roosts are legally protected by law across Europe. This means you may be committing a criminal offence if you:

- **Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;**
- **Intentionally disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;**
- **Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);**
- **Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat.**

Will Bats Stop Development?

Bats, their roosts, foraging habitats and their aversion to light pollution will need to be considered within a proposed development.

A developer will often enlist the services of an ecological consultant to advise on potential impacts. A developer may seek a derogation from the NIEA to permit closure of a bat roost. If NIEA is satisfied that there is over-riding public interest and that bats can still be accommodated despite closure of a roost, then it may license closure of a roost under strict conditions.

The illegal interference with bat roosts can cause delays to works, generate negative publicity and can be expensive to resolve. You may also end up with a criminal record and fine. Early identification of where a bat roost might come into conflict with your planned operations can save you time and ultimately money.

If you have identified a potential problem with a bat roost on site you can seek initial advice from the NIEA publication 'Bats and Development' <https://goo.gl/7HQXfs> or speak to the NIEA Wildlife Team 028 9056 9558.

Wildlife crimes in Northern Ireland are investigated by the police. If you believe that a crime is ongoing or has taken place contact the PSNI by telephoning: 101 - see overleaf.

There is a bat roost in my house - Some species of bats occasionally set up home inside occupied buildings. Ordinarily this does not pose a problem to the humans as they are out of sight and mind; but sometimes they can cause difficulties if they regularly enter the living areas, or if over time odour becomes apparent. **As bats are protected you must seek advice and a licence before taking any action.** Often some minor adjustments can be made to allow both parties to live together without further

conflict. Under exceptional circumstances NIEA can issue a licence to exclude the bats from a property because they present a serious health and safety concern. There is a restricted timeframe when these licences are issued. Where you have these concerns you should in the first instance contact **CEDaR on 028 9039 5264**. Thereafter a bat worker will contact you. They may require a home visit to assess the situation. **It is best remembered that a bat in Northern Ireland is very unlikely to cause you any direct harm, and you are more likely to injure yourself if you panic!**

Bat first aid - what if I come across a bat?

Most bats found inside and grounded around buildings are young bats that are trying to master the art of flying! Never try to catch a flying bat as you may injure it and bats that are caught while flying may attempt to bite, be patient!

Bats inside the house or office -

Wait until the bat lands and settles. Wearing gloves you can either gently scoop the bat up in cupped hands or quietly approach the bat covering it using a tea towel. Gently gather the



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bat up and place it into a ventilated box with a lid such e.g. a shoe box. Keep the box at room temperature, somewhere quiet, away from pets and children. Place a bottle top of water into the box to help keep the bat hydrated.

If you find a grounded bat during the day it is in danger from cats or other predators so it is better to take it into captivity temporarily as above.

Release of healthy bats -

If the contained bat was previously flying around, wait until dusk. Gently place the open box on it's side on top of an external wall or hedge away from bright lights (keeping all pets away). The bat should fly away after a short time. If the bat does not fly away within 1-2 hours, please call a bat worker in your area.

Injured bats - If the bat was not flying when it was found, or you find a bat during winter months please call a local bat worker for advice. Contact details can be found at: www.bats-ni.org.uk/grounded-and-injured-bats/

Further advice can be found on the NI Bat Groups website: www.bats-ni.org.uk



Common Pipistrelle
- R Corner/BCT