

ADVISORY INFORMATION – BATS



There are 18 species of bat in the UK. **Bats and their roosts are legally protected, whether bats are occupying the roost or not.** In most cases works can take place as long as you plan ahead and follow certain rules. In addition to roosting sites, quarries may provide good feeding grounds for bats with high abundance of insect prey.

Quarries - Key Points

- Bats may roost on quarries particularly in old trees and caves
- Bats are protected under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (see Section 2.2) and a Natural England licence is required where works are likely to disturb, damage or destroy their place of rest or breeding site.
- Avoid prosecution: it is a criminal offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or handle a bat without a licence, to possess a bat (whether alive or dead), disturb a roosting bat, or damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats.
- Individuals can be prosecuted as well as the company. Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per bat and/or up to 6 months in prison.
- If you think you have found a bat or a bat roost on site, IMMEDIATELY stop all works in the area and inform your line manager or site management. Management should then contact an ecological consultant who can advise on how to continue with further works.
- Do Not Try to touch or handle a bat. They are very delicate and you are likely to cause them serious harm—it is also breaking the law.
- Do Not Destroy any potential habitat without getting it checked. All trees to be felled must be surveyed for nesting birds and bats before work commences.
- If bats or signs of their use are seen work should be suspended and advice sought from a licensed ecologist.
- If you think a feature of your active quarry may be used by bats notify your sustainability team.

Bat Ecology

All British bats are insectivores; therefore they are only active when their insect food is available. Activity usually takes place between the end of March and the beginning of October. Bats go into hibernation to conserve energy reserves. To disturb bats when they are hibernating depletes these reserves at a time when no food is available and could result in the bat or colony of bats failing to survive the winter.

Bats may return to the same roost for many years and they may use several different roost sites during a season. Several bat species roost out of sight in cracks and crevices and there may be few signs that bats inhabit a structure. Bat droppings look very similar to rodent droppings but are dry and will crumble to dust under very little pressure. If you notice any droppings in the loft space or externally, check them with a quick crumble test (with gloves).



Contact with bats

- Do not touch or handle bats (unless licensed and then only when essential).
- Do not photograph roosting bats. Flashguns can be very disturbing.
- Do not warm up hibernating bats. This can arouse them. Try not to stand underneath them or linger in confined spaces as even your body heat is sufficient to cause arousal.
- Do not shine bright lights on bats. Both the light and the heat can trigger arousal.
- Do seek advice before blasting or digging. Explosives can cause problems both from the blast itself and from the subsequent fumes. In known bat sites blasting should be limited to the time when bats are not present or to areas not known to be used by bats.

Surveys

Surveys are required where work is planned that might affect locations where it is considered that bats are, or are likely to, be present. Surveyors must hold a Natural England licence where it is necessary to enter a roost site or where the survey is likely to disturb bats.

Remember, all bats are protected by legislation making it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or handle a bat without a licence, to possess a bat (whether alive or dead), disturb a roosting bat, or damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats.

If you would like more advice contact Bat Conservation Trust at www.bats.org.uk **Bat Helpline**
0845 1300 228