



What type of survey do I need?

Bat scoping surveys

At UES, we can complete bat scoping surveys all year round, assessing the general suitability of a building for use by bats.

Our ecologists are experienced bat surveyors who are licensed by Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. We're legally allowed to disturb bats when we're surveying them, which includes entering known bat roosts and handling bats when necessary.

Our surveys are carried out in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines (2016), which recommend inspecting both the interior and exterior of a building for bats, signs of bats and potential roosting sites.

We carry out external inspections at ground level, using binoculars, ladders and endoscopes to investigate any and all bat-sized gaps. Our internal inspections cover all accessible rooms and roof spaces using high-powered torches and endoscopes.

If the site is not suitable for use by bats, your project will be able to continue without further survey work or licensing. However, if the site does have the potential to support roosting bats, we may need to complete further more detailed surveys. These include:

- Ground level and aerial tree inspections
- Presence/absence surveys
- Activity surveys
- Hibernation surveys

Ground level and aerial tree inspections are available all year, while presence / absence surveys and activity surveys are available from May to September, and hibernation surveys are carried out from November to March.

Ground level and aerial tree inspections

If you are planning on pruning or felling a tree you may require a preliminary ground level and aerial tree inspection. A survey may also be required if potential bat roosts within a tree could be indirectly impacted by artificial lighting, or loss of vegetation which link the tree to habitats further afield. We can complete this type of survey at any time of year, although the optimal period is December to March when there is minimal leaf cover.

Our surveys are carried out in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines (2016), which recommends an inspection of the exterior of the tree from ground level looking for features that bats could use for roosting. Potential roosting features in trees include:

- Holes e.g. woodpecker holes
- Peeling bark
- Cracks and splits (in trunks and limbs)
- Cavities / crevices
- Deadwood



UES ecologists are not only licensed bat surveyors, but CS38 qualified tree climbers. If we note any potential roosting features, our surveyors can carry out a closer aerial inspection. This prevents unnecessary emergence / re-entry surveys, where features appear to be of high suitability from the ground but are actually of limited or no suitability when inspected closely.

Bat presence / absence surveys

If we've carried out a bat scoping survey or tree inspection, and found evidence of bats, the next step is to complete a bat presence / absence survey. As per the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines (2016), our licensed bat surveyors can undertake these surveys May to September (inclusive).

We conduct dusk surveys to record bats emerging from a building / tree, and dawn surveys to record bats returning to roost. This allows us to establish the number, species and roosting points used by bats. Sophisticated bat detectors are used to record individual bat calls, allowing us to identify the species.

If we record roosting bats, a further roost characterisation survey (RCS) is usually required to ascertain the features and characteristics of the roost (size, perching points, aspect, orientation, temperature, humidity, lighting) and the surrounding area (proximity of vegetation to exits points, availability of foraging areas locally). We use this information to design a suitable mitigation strategy.

Bat activity surveys

If your development is likely to impact habitats suitable for use by commuting and foraging bats, such as hedgerows, tree lines and rough grassland, bat activity surveys may be required. As per the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines (2016), these surveys can be undertaken May to September (inclusive).

Activity surveys involve licensed bat surveyors walking transect routes in order to observe, listen for and record bats using the site. Bat detectors are also deployed at fixed locations to record bat activity remotely. We use this information to design a suitable mitigation strategy.

Bat hibernation surveys

If your development is likely to impact a building suitable for use by hibernating bats, bat hibernation surveys may be required. As per the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines (2016), these surveys can be undertaken November to March (inclusive).

Our surveys include a detailed inspection of the building during the winter to look for and identify hibernating bats. With the exception of horseshoe bats, which usually hang freely from the walls and ceilings of buildings, hibernating bat species are often under-recorded because they crawl deep into crevices and can be difficult to find. We conduct a detailed and systematic inspection of all potential roosting sites using torches and endoscopes. Bat detectors can also be deployed to record bats when they periodically wake to drink and feed during warm weather. We use this information to design a suitable mitigation strategy.