

Bats are increasingly using buildings for roosting as natural sites in tree holes and caves become more scarce or disturbed. All buildings, in particular the walls, eaves and roofs, are potential roost sites.

Anyone working regularly in these areas such as surveyors, architects, plumbers, roofers, pest technicians and insulators should be aware of what signs to look out for and how to work within the law.

Legal Protection for bats

The Conservation of Wildlife Law, 2000 (hereafter referred to as The Wildlife Law) provides local protection for Jersey's bats who are also afforded International protection from the Bern and Bonn agreements.

Because all bat species are considered vulnerable the Law asks that anyone doing **anything in relation to a bat notifies the Environment Division of the proposed action or operation and allows them a reasonable time to advise as to whether it should be carried out and, if so, the method to be used.**

Because the Law states that anything in relation to a bat is notifiable, even indirect actions such as treatment of roof spaces with toxic chemicals like those found in wood preservatives or electrical, plumbing or building work should only be carried out in roofs that bat roost in AFTER first notifying the Environment Division.

So, in order to work within the Law: -

- *Before beginning any work be sure there are NO bats present.*
- *If there are bats presents or you even just suspect their MIGHT be **contact the Environment Division for advice.** Work will not necessarily be prevented but advice will be given on the best way for the work to be carried out.*
- *If operations have already started when bats or their roosts are discovered, work should stop and the Environment Division contacted at the first available opportunity.*



Looking for Evidence

Bats do not make nests, nor cause structural damage. The most obvious sign of their presence is droppings.

• **Bat droppings** consist largely of insect remains and will crumble easily between your fingers to a harmless powder of semi-shiny fragments. They contrast with **rodent droppings** which are smooth and plastic. They quickly become hard and cannot be crumbled. Bat droppings do not present any

known health hazards.

• Droppings may not always be readily visible in a roof. Large accumulations may reflect use over a number of years rather than large numbers of bats at anyone time. Bat droppings are frequently mistaken for mouse droppings, so do the '**crumble test**'

A good search for evidence requires time and a practised eye – if you are in doubt please call the Environment Division. for assistance.

Where do bats roost in buildings?

Different sorts of bats prefer different places, however most will creep into tiny spaces. Bats rarely hang free, choosing instead to creep into cracks and crevices.

Outside they may roost:

- Under weather boarding or hanging tiles
- Above soffits and behind fascia and barge boarding

- In gaps behind cladding tiles or wood
- Between underfelt and boards or tiles
- Inside cavity walls.

Inside roof spaces, they may roost

- Along the ridge beam
 - Around the gable end
 - Around the chimney breast
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Best practice for working in bat roosts

The control of wasps, bees or hornets, cluster flies and rodents may unintentionally affect bats or their roosts, so care should be taken where bats are or known to have been, present.

Rodenticides should not be placed in an open

tray below roosting bats.

Insecticides recommended as safe for use near mammals are based on permethrin and cypermethrin.

Ask advise too on the range of **fungicides** approved for use in sites by bats.

When do bats use buildings ?

Bats may use buildings at any time, but are most often found in houses between May and August.

- Mother bats have only one baby a year, suckling it for several weeks. The mothers gather in maternity roosts to have their babies in the summer, and it is at this time they are most likely to use buildings.
- The bats move away when the young can fly and feed themselves, and have usually left by September.
- Immature individuals, adult males and nonbreeding females will occupy a variety of roosts, individually or in small groups.
- Disturbance or the use of toxic chemicals at maternity roosts in houses can have a major

impact on bat populations gathered from a wide area.

- Bats do roost in houses in winter, usually individually, but are rarely found.

All of the species of bat recorded in Jersey have been recorded in houses. Commonly **Pipistrelle** bats use houses as maternity roosts, choosing confined spaces. These are usually on the outside of the buildings, such as under soffits or behind barge boards or hanging tiles, where the bats can rarely be seen. **Grey long-eared bats** mostly prefer older houses with high open roof spaces. Small clusters may be seen at junctions of roof timbers or under the ridge.

Who to Contact

Environment Division
Howard David Farm
Route de la Trinite
Trinity JE3 5JP
David Tipping (Tel: 441600)
Email d.tipping@gov.je

Jersey Bat Group (Tel: 07700 333824) Answer phone
Email jerseybatgroup@yahoo.co.uk
Web: jerseybatgroup.org.je

