



**Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment
Survey Report**

Former Filling Station

A93

Kincardine O'Neil

AB34 5AA

Grid Reference: NO58939969

**Survey carried out by: North East Nature, 4 Corrichie Place,
Banchory, AB31 5WB Tel: 01330 822937
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Date: 17/10/23



Summary

- A bat survey was requested in relation to a planning application to redevelop a redundant site.
- A Preliminary Roost Assessment identified some bat potential which was ruled out on close inspection.
- **There are no bat conservation implications for the planned work.**
- Birds have nested at the east gable in the past.
- There should be a check for any nesting birds ahead of demolition work as birds' nests are protected when in use.
- If the hedge is to be removed it should be between September and February/early March to avoid the bird nesting season.
- If the hedge is removed then alternative nesting sites such as new trees/shrubs or bird boxes should be included in the development.
- Consideration should be given to native planting post development of the site.

1. Introduction

A preliminary bat roost assessment was requested in relation to plans to demolish a redundant filling station and redevelop the site. All British bats are protected by law. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly, kill or injure a bat, disturb a roosting bat or damage, destroy or obstruct access to any bat roost. Both summer and winter roosts are protected and activity which may disturb or damage a bat roost requires a licence from NatureScot.

2. Site description

The building was a filling station shop and store with a garage/workshop and public toilets, but is currently empty. Walls are constructed of cement blocks and the roof is tiles on MDF board. The garage/workshop has an inspection pit which is closed over with wooden boards. The interior has high levels of light. There is a large attic which is uninsulated.

The setting of the site is within the village of Kincardine O'Neil. There is a grassed plot of land at the south of the site which is hedged on three sides. The hedges provide some connectivity to garden and village trees beyond the site. The Boat Wood is 100m to the west across a new housing estate with few trees or shrubs. The River Dee is approximately 350m to the south. There is moderate bat foraging potential at the site.

3. Methodology

The aim of the study was to establish if bats use the building or if there is potential for bats. If bat potential could not be ruled out then further effort during the active bat season would most likely be required for the project to progress through the planning system.

NBN records were examined for evidence of bats in the area and the owner was asked if they were aware of bats at the property.

A building check identified any areas of potential and checked all areas for any signs of bats. Wall heads were examined with a strong torch and the roof was viewed using binoculars. The attic was examined for bats or any droppings/feeding signs. A ladder and endoscope were used.

4. Results

4.1 Desk study

NBN records identify the presence of the following species within 2km:

- Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
- Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)
- Brown long eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*)
- Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)

The surveyor also has personal knowledge of additional species within 2km:

- Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*)
- Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*)

The owner was not aware of any bats in the property.

4.2 Survey undertaken

Preliminary Roost Assessment

17/10/2023

9 – 10.30am

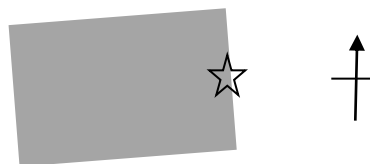
Dry, sunny, cold, light air

Aileen Salway

The building is relatively simple with good views into all areas. The interior is empty and clean. The bare walls and floors had no signs of bats including in the inspection pit in the workshop and the two toilets. The whole building has high light levels and no hidden gaps which bats could access. The attic is uninsulated and empty. It was closely inspected for droppings and none were found. The interior of the soffit is visible from inside the attic leaving very little hidden potential.

The roof is tiles on mdf board. Tiles are well fitting and heavily mossed across the roof and the ridge is tight offering no bat roosting potential. The soffit box has a high gloss exterior which has degraded in recent years offering a little bit of grip for bats to land on. The area where the soffit box meets the tiles is fairly tight but there are some small gaps under the tiles that could be bat accessible. On re-checking the loft, these open onto the top of the mdf board which only butts up against the soffit. Across the roof the boards have sagged slightly and the sagging would allow bat droppings to fall into the attic interior. There are no droppings present. These potential gaps are therefore ruled out as having bat roosts.

On the north-west of the building there is a small gap where the soffit meets the stonework. This was checked and ruled out as having bat potential. Both gables are tight with no bat potential but the east gable has a likely old housemartin nest at the apex (marked as star in diagram below. No bat droppings were seen on the exterior of the building.



4.3 Constraints on survey

The survey was outside of the recognised period for activity surveys and therefore only a Potential Roost Assessment (PRA) was carried out. The owner was made aware that there may be a need for a follow up summer survey if the building showed potential for bats or further information of species/numbers was required. The building style allowed for any identified bat potential to be fully checked and ruled out.

4.4 Roost site identified

None.

5. Hibernation

The building is unoccupied and has no evidence of roosting bats. Whilst the building is cool, any hibernation potential is regarded as low due to the limited bat access and lack of any signs of bat use including at a time that bats are starting to access hibernacula.

6. Evaluation

The proposed development involves the demolition of the building and the redevelopment of the site.

- There is no evidence of bat roosting at the site so there are no bat conservation implications for the planned work.
- A birds' nest is present on the exterior of the building. There should be a check for any nesting birds ahead of demolition work as birds' nests are protected when in use.
- Similarly if hedges are to be removed there is a high risk of nesting birds. If the hedge is to be removed it should be between September and February/early March.
- Consideration should be given to native planting post development of the site. Trees such as the rowan are an appropriate size for small sites. Some areas laid to grass could use a perennial wildflower mix which supports invertebrates as well as being visually interesting.
- If the hedge is removed then alternative nesting sites such as new trees/shrubs or bird boxes should be included in the development. Various designs of bird boxes are available from suppliers such as www.nhbs.com

7. Survey validity

Bat surveys are normally valid for two summers, after this time an update survey is likely to be required.

8. NESBReC data

The client is happy for data to be shared with the records centre.

Surveyors:

Aileen Salway - Bat licence 195671

Appendix 1 - surveyor qualifications and report references

Aileen Salway MCIEEM

- Freelance ecologist since 2010
- Previously worked as Ranger/Naturalist with the National Trust for Scotland for 13 years
- MSc Rural and Regional Resources Planning (Aberdeen 1993)
- MA (Hons) Geography (Aberdeen 1992)
- Committee member of North East Scotland Bat Group
- Bat Low Impact (BLIMP) bat licence holder

Bat Conservation Trust (2016) "Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: 3rd Edition", BCT, London
Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004) "Bat mitigation guidelines", English Nature

Appendix 2 - Bat species and lifecycles

In the north-east of Scotland there are five species of bats generally found: common and soprano pipistrelle, brown long eared and two species of Myotis bats, namely Daubenton's and Natterer's. Leisler's bats and Nathusius's pipistrelle are less commonly encountered.

Both common and soprano pipistrelle use man-made structures to roost and can be found in both a rural and urban context. Brown long eared bats often roost in old buildings with large attics, preferring buildings associated with mature woodland in which they can forage. Daubenton's roost close to still or running water bodies, either in trees or structures such as bridges. Natterer's have a similar habit to brown long eared bats but are less common in the north east of Scotland.

Female bats roost together as a colony from May until the autumn. They usually have one baby in June which is reliant on its mother for two months and will remain in the roost while the mother goes out to feed. In the autumn the colony will move from their warm summer roost, often in buildings, to a cooler winter roost which may be in trees, unheated buildings with thick stone walls, caves and similar places. In their winter roost they become torpid as the weather cools and they hibernate.

Male bats live in smaller groups or individually in cooler roosts such as steadings or tree holes but can be found in maternity colonies in the early autumn when mating takes place.

While bats are hibernating they are particularly vulnerable to disturbance. Each time they wake it uses up their energy stores and with repeated disturbance the result can be their death.

Appendix 3 - The legal status of bats

All British bats have been protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and more recently by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994 (as amended) (the Conservation Regulations). These Regulations implement, the European Habitats Directive ((EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna) in Great Britain. All species of bat found in Britain are listed in the Conservation Regulations as European protected species.

In Scotland you may be committing an offence if you, deliberately or recklessly:

- Capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Harass a bat or group of bats;
- Disturb a bat while it is rearing or otherwise caring for its young;
- Obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place (bat roost or hibernation site), or otherwise

deny a bat use of a breeding site or resting place;

- Disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection;
- Disturb a bat in a manner that is, or in circumstances which are, likely to significantly affect

the local distribution or abundance of the species to which it belongs; or

- Disturb a bat in a manner that is, or in circumstances which are, likely to impair its ability to

survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or otherwise care for its young; or

obstruct, damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place (whether or not the damage or destruction is carried out deliberately or recklessly).

It is important to note that bat roosts are protected, even when the bats are not present. An offence does not need to be intentional, as seen by the term "recklessly", which covers any damaging action regardless of intention.