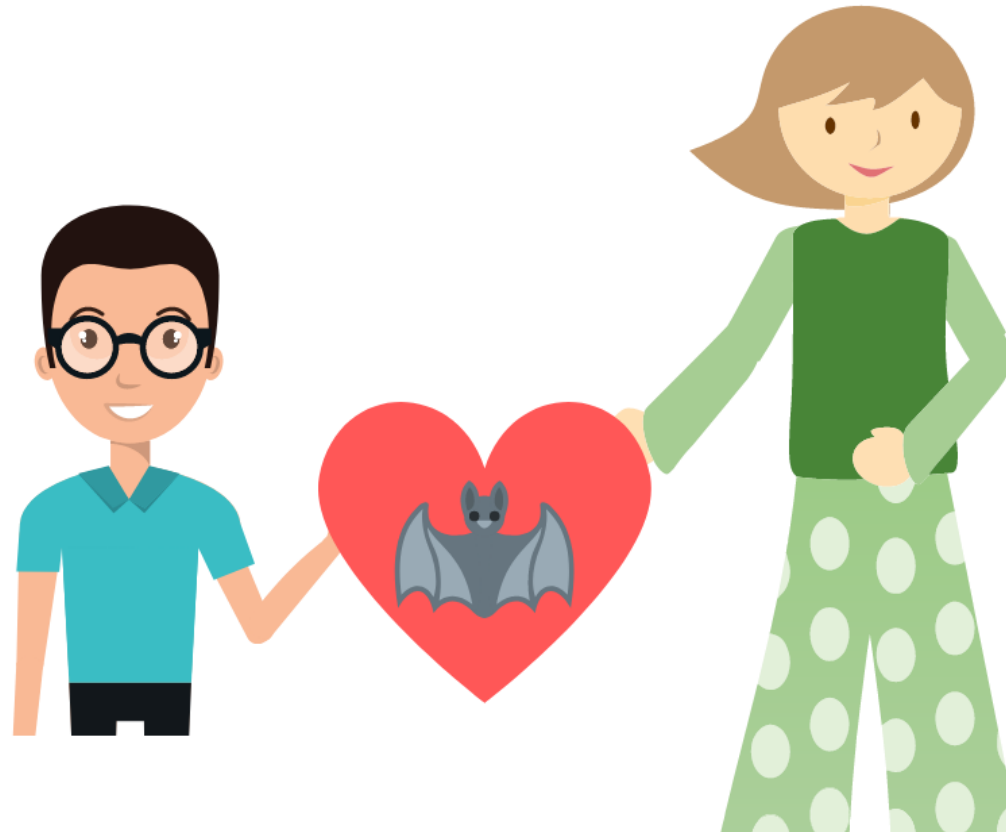
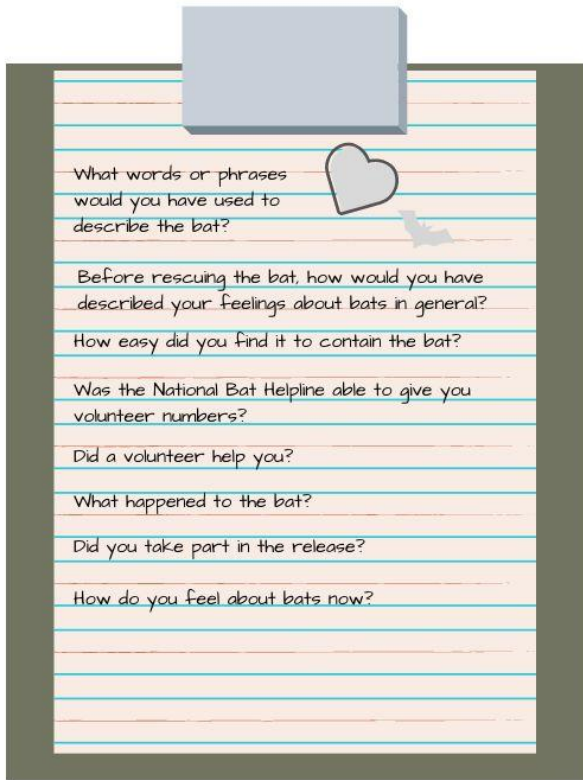


National Bat Helpline Bat Finder Survey results December 2020





A link to our Bat Finder Survey is sent to everyone who contacts the National Bat Helpline about a grounded or injured bat and gives us permission to email.



It has been sent regularly since October 2018, except during the first coronavirus lockdown in March-June 2020 (when we were following different procedures for bat care calls, so the survey's questions were not relevant).



The survey had 386 responses between October 2018 and December 2020.

Here are some things it's taught us

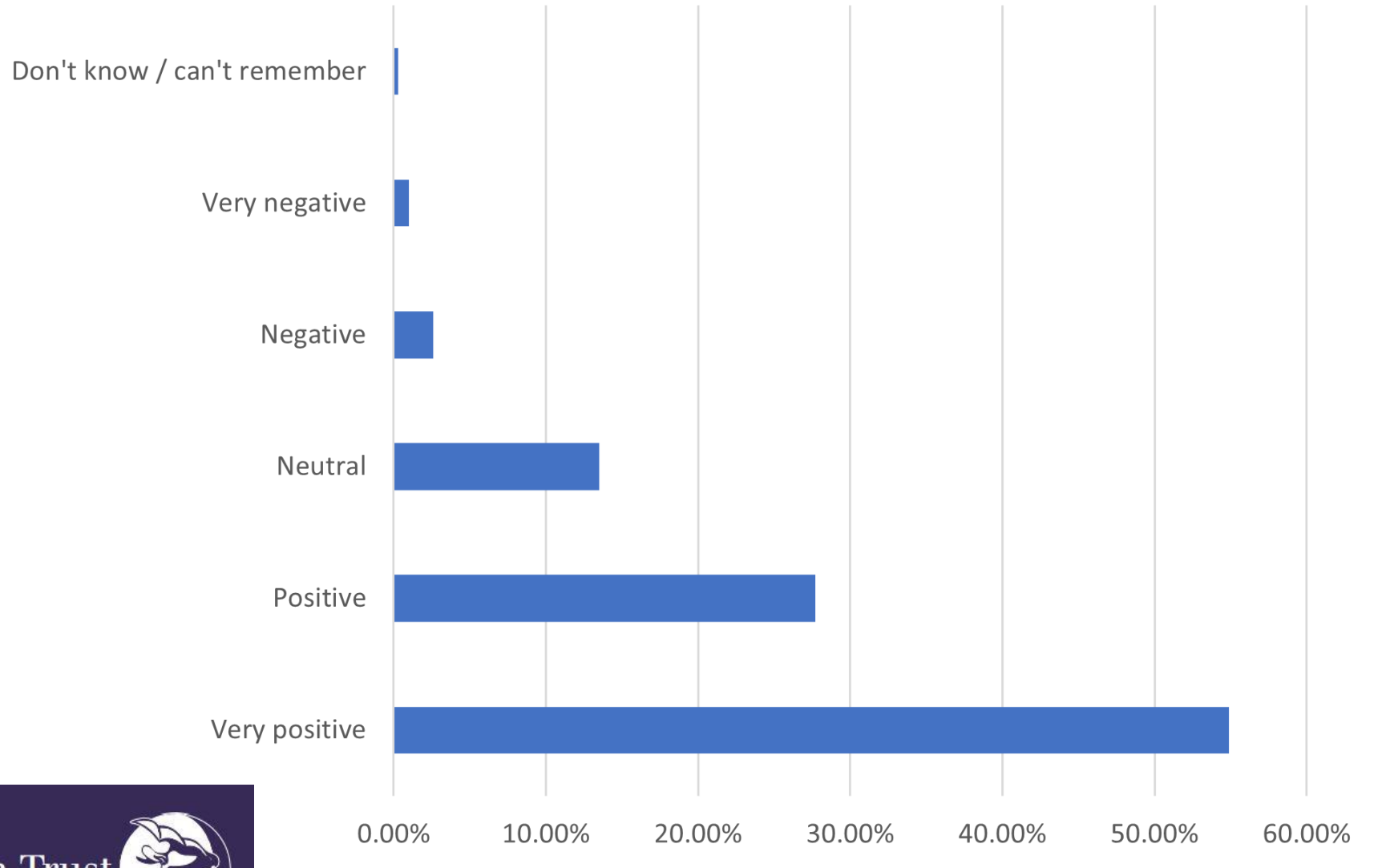


83% of callers were rescuing a bat for the first time.

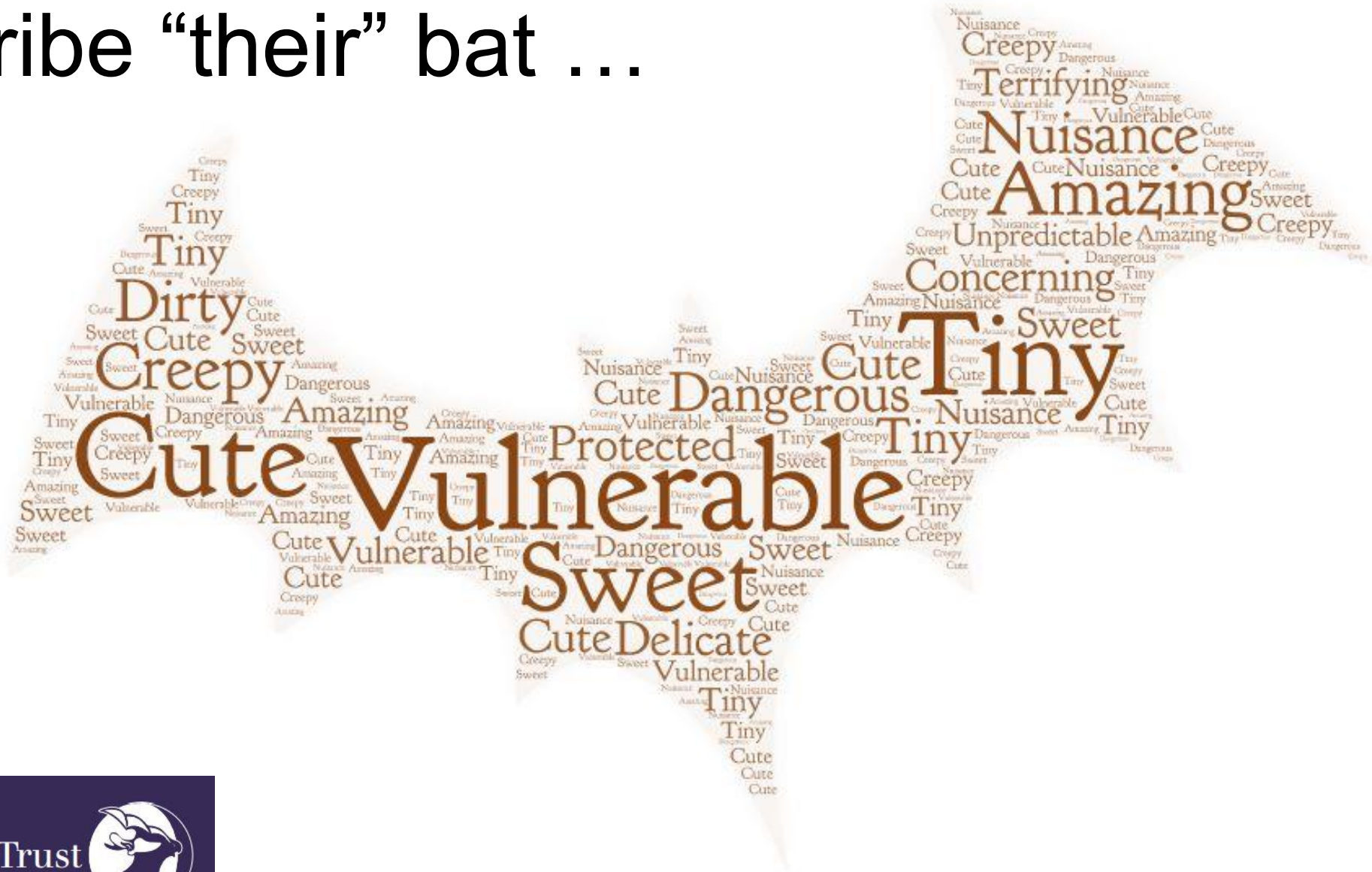
Most of them liked bats already, but some brave souls overcame negative feelings or even fear.



Before you found the bat, how would you have described your feelings about bats in general?



Some of the words used by finders to describe “their” bat ...



Boxing clever



95% of bat finders contained the bat themselves.

Of those, 90% found it “easy” or “very easy.”

And only 1% of bats escaped!

62% of respondents found containing the bat “very easy;” 24% found it “easy;” 8% found it “neither easy nor hard;” 1% found it “hard;” 3% got someone else to contain the bat; and 2% said they weren’t asked to contain it.



How often can volunteers help?

The National Bat Helpline was able to give out volunteer numbers in

82% of cases.



And in **78%** of those cases, a volunteer was able to help.

That means volunteers helped with **64%** of all bats.



In cases where no volunteers were available, 80% of callers were told to take the bat to a vet; 10% were told to release the bat at dusk following a phone assessment of its condition; and 10% couldn't remember what instructions the Helpline had given.



In cases where volunteer numbers were given but no volunteers could help, 29% of bats were released by the finder; 26% were taken to vets; 25% were taken to a volunteer or wildlife hospital not on the UK Bat Care Network; 13% died without getting help; and 7% escaped.



Going the extra mile

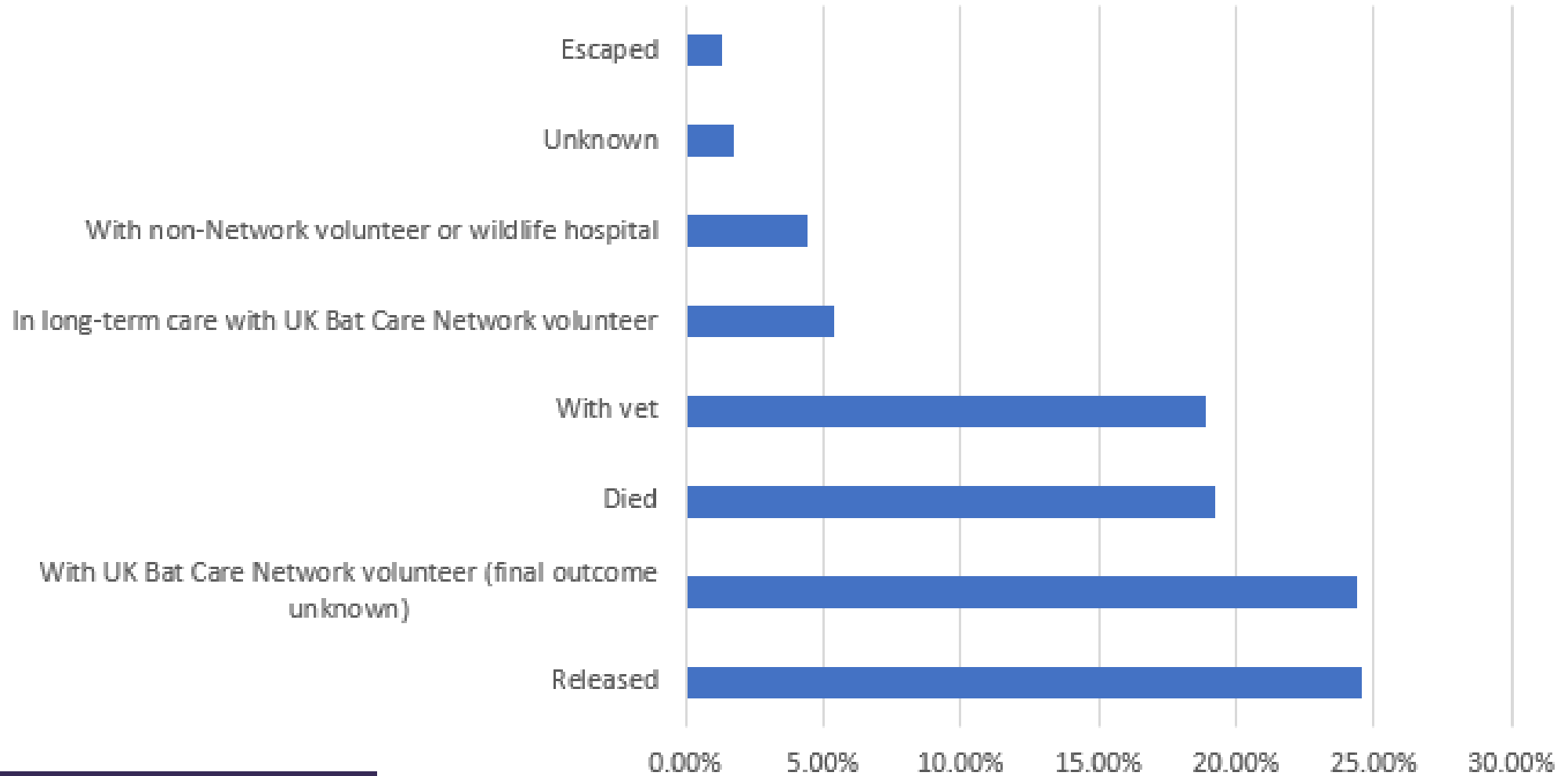
Volunteers came to collect

67% of the bats they helped.



In **82%** of rescues,
volunteers gave finders more info
about their bat or bats in general.

Last reported outcome for rescued bats



62% of finders who had been helped by volunteers had been contacted by the volunteer with a final update.

Another 12% were being kept in the loop, while 26% had never been told what had happened to the bat.



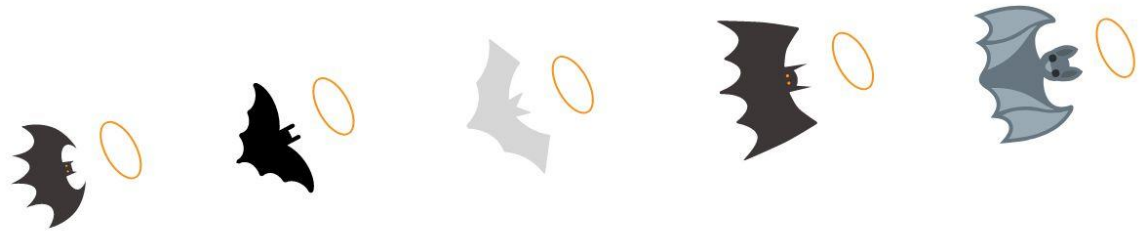
It's thus not possible to say what the final outcome was in 38% of cases where a Network volunteer helped. It's also not possible to know the outcome when a bat went to a vet or non-Network volunteer.



The number of bats released includes those released by a volunteer after recovery; those released by the finder on the advice of National Bat Helpline staff; and those released by the finder without advice.



The number of dead bats includes those that died directly from injuries or ill health, and those euthanized on welfare grounds.



Many of the bats in long-term care will have been found in winter or late autumn and need to be kept over the hibernation season before they are released in the spring. Others may simply need a long time to recover from injuries.



A small number of bats that are found to be unfit for release may be kept permanently in captivity as “education bats.” This is only done under licence from the volunteer’s Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation.

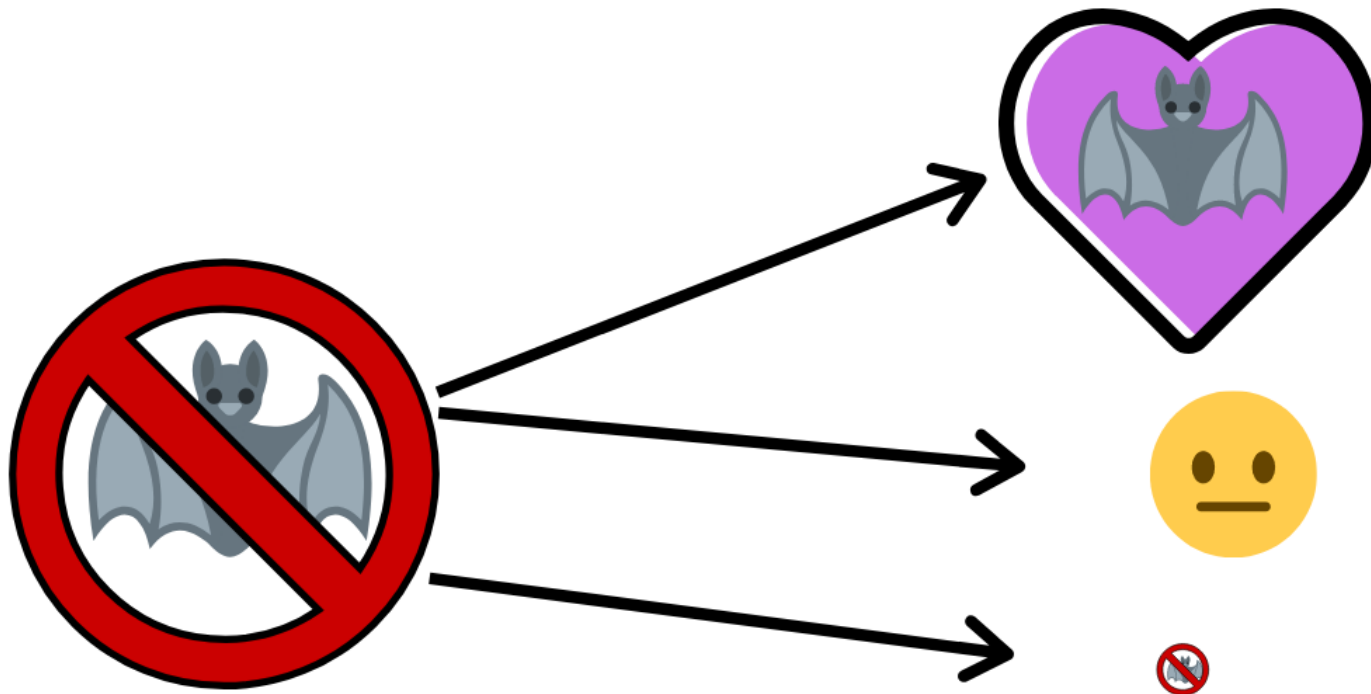


*Photo by Peter Crome
(taken pre-Covid-19)*



From hate to love

Among those who started as “negative” or “very negative” toward bats:



64%

changed to “positive” or
“very positive”

29%

changed to “neutral”

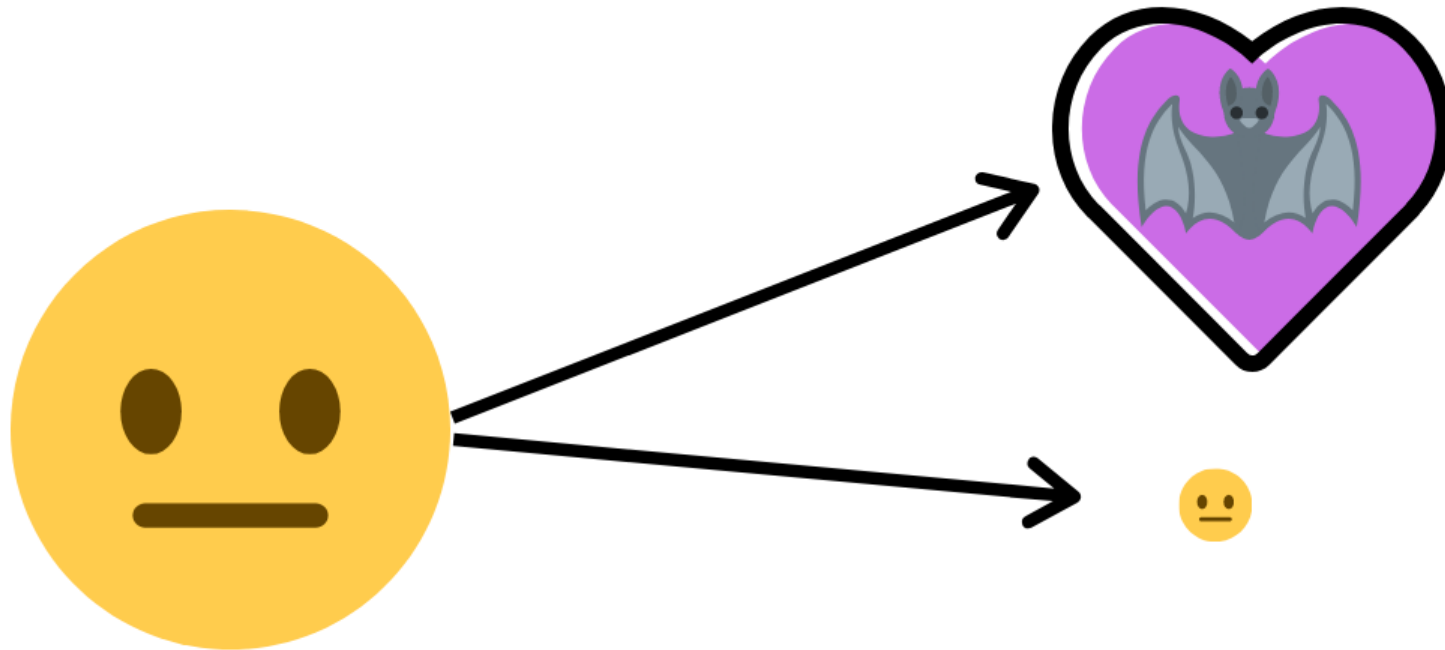
7%

stayed the same



From indifference to love

Among those who started as “neutral” toward bats:



73%

changed to “positive” or
“very positive”

25%

stayed the same



Following their bat rescue, 75% of respondents expressed a “very positive” feeling toward bats; 20% felt “positive;” 4% felt “neutral;” and 1% felt “very negative.” One person had changed from “neutral” to “very negative.” All other changes were in a positive direction.



Getting involved

Of those who hadn't previously done any bat-related activity,

19% had done so since the rescue.

That includes **18%** of those who previously had negative or neutral attitudes!



Examples of bat-related activity included watching bats, reading or watching videos about them, participating in bat walks or talks, or joining a local bat group. Nearly 50% of respondents hadn't engaged in any activity before the rescue.



Bon voyage!



In cases where a volunteer successfully released a bat, **72%** of finders were invited to take part in the release.

And **82%** of those invited did!



Thank you to everyone who's taken part in the survey so far ... and everyone who's helped a bat!



We will update the results periodically.

