Dear bat group member,

It has been a rather warm February, with lots of people reporting seeing bats flying and a corresponding dip in the counts from some hibernation sites. It will certainly be interesting to see what this year’s hibernation data looks like once all of the records are in. Hopefully you’ll have time between other activities to catch-up with the latest news, publications, forthcoming events and training in this bulletin. This edition includes:

1. Bat Conservation Trust Board of Trustees Recruiting a New Chair
2. Draft Environment Bill Consultation
3. Help the Helpline this Summer – Volunteer for OOH!
4. Thames Valley Bat Crime Conviction
5. Change in Natural England Licence Reporting Deadlines
6. Managing Woodlands with Ash Dieback and Bats – Current Guidance & Recommendations
7. Change in Natural England Licence Reporting Deadlines
8. Tesco Bags of Help Centenary Grants
9. Natural England BatLine Newsletter Request for Content
10. Just Giving Text Donations Closure
11. Training in Project Management & Strategy Development for Conservationists
12. Bat Research Papers, Reports & Other Batty Media
13. Key Dates for Your Diary (Events, Conferences & Training)

1. Bat Conservation Trust Board of Trustees is Recruiting a New Chair
   We are lucky to have a range of involved and committed trustees on the BCT board, each of them bringing valuable skills and experience. David Gibbons, who has been our Chair since 2015, will step down at the AGM this year as he has served as a trustee for the permitted maximum term of nine years.

   The trustees have decided to recruit externally for a Chair to replace him. Please see the details on the BCT website at: https://www.bats.org.uk/the-trust/jobs-careers/chair-of-the-board-of-trustees which includes a role description with details of the qualities we are looking for. If you think you have those qualities or know someone who does please do get in touch. The deadline for applications is 9 am on Monday 25 March.

2. Draft Environment Bill Consultation
   The draft Environment Bill was published in December, and its clauses are being scrutinised by two parliamentary committees: the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee and the Environmental Audit Committee.

   The committees are keen to hear from a wide range of people. To facilitate this Greener UK’s campaigns group has put together a joint survey to capture views on the proposed watchdog and environmental principles and what people want to see achieved by the broader bill. Although the initial deadline for the survey has passed, it is still open for further contributions so please do take part.
You can find the survey here: 
https://environmentbill.typeform.com/to/Jbeijh

Greener UK representatives and coalition organisation partners appearing in front of the committees will use key findings from the survey to back-up the policy arguments they present.

3. Help the Helpline this Summer – Volunteer for OOH!
The National Bat Helpline receives its highest numbers of enquiries during the summer months when bats are most active. In order to keep up with keep up with the demand for help from people who have found grounded bats, an emergency Out of Hours (OOH) Helpline is operated from May to September. This OOH Helpline is operated by trained volunteers, who answer calls from the public related to bat care and bat crime on evenings and weekends. Volunteers attend an interactive and informative training day before carrying out ‘bat watches’ from the comfort of their home. Volunteers also receive full support from BCT staff throughout the project.

Volunteering on the OOH Helpline is a very rewarding experience for beginners, experienced bat workers and everyone in between. This opportunity is ideal for those wanting to get involved in conservation from home and can be a great way to learn more about bat rescue and rehabilitation. It would not be possible to run such a service without the volunteers and your help is hugely appreciated.

2018 was one of our busiest OOH seasons ever with 48 volunteers taking over 2,000 calls throughout the season. More information about how the project is organised can be found on the BCT website along with a full report on the 2018 OOH season.

How to volunteer
If you’re interested in receiving more information, please contact Grace on the Helpline via outofhours@bats.org.uk or 0345 1300 228 and we’ll send some further information. All volunteers will need to attend one of the following training sessions:

- Sunday 28th April in London.
- Saturday 11th May in York.

Spaces tend to fill up quickly so get in touch to avoid disappointment!

4. Thames Valley Police bat crime conviction
To our knowledge this is the first case of bat crime investigated by Thames Valley Police that has ever been prosecuted. Read more about the case and the outcome at: https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2019/02/thames-valley-police-bat-crime-conviction

5. Change in Natural England Licence Reporting Deadlines
Natural England have changed the deadline for annual licence returns. Previously these had to be submitted by the end of April to cover the previous year (to the end of March). This deadline has now been changed to the end of June (but still covering the period to the end of March as we understand it).

6. Managing Woodlands with Ash Dieback and Bats – Current Guidance & Recommendations
Since it was first reported back in 2012, ash dieback has become a significant threat to one of UK’s native broadleaf trees, a species that is found in many woodlands in Britain. There are concerns on how to manage ash dieback and how this will affect the conservation of flora and fauna, including bats, when dealing with concerns over public safety. This has highlighted the need to have a page on the BCT website which will signpost the reader to all the recent guidance, recommendations and information on how best to manage woodlands with ash dieback and bats. You can find out more at: [https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/landscapes-for-bats/bats-and-woodland/current-guidance-to-help-manage-woodlands-with-ash-die-back](https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/landscapes-for-bats/bats-and-woodland/current-guidance-to-help-manage-woodlands-with-ash-die-back)

7. Woodland Wildlife Toolkit
Tuesday 29th of January 2019, saw the launch of the Woodland Wildlife Toolkit, an online toolkit where advice and guidance on managing woodlands for wildlife, in particular, rare and declining species that are dependent on woodland habitats, can be found.

Within the toolkit you will be able to search for your woodland wildlife, get an overview of your woodland condition, look at various woodland guidance for practical advice on management techniques and issues, read species factsheets containing summary information for all the species found in the toolkit and gain access to management plan templates and the myForest web tool developed by the Sylva Foundation.

As a partnership project the toolkit was developed by the following partners: Bat Conservation Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Forestry Commission, Natural England, Plantlife, RSPB, Sylva Foundation and the Woodland Trust. You can find out more at: [https://woodlandwildlifetoolkit.sylva.org.uk/](https://woodlandwildlifetoolkit.sylva.org.uk/)

8. Natural England BatLine Newsletter Request for Content
Natural England produce a regular newsletter for Volunteer Bat Roost Visitors (VBRVs) and are after interesting batty articles and images. If you have something that you’d like to share with VBRVs please contact Andrew Dumbleton, the BatLine editor, at: batvolunteers@naturalengland.org.uk

9. Tesco Bags of Help Centenary Grants
Tesco Bags of Help Centenary Grants are now open for not-for-profit organisations to apply for. Grants of up to £25,000 area available for projects that bring significant benefit to communities.

The Centenary Grants are two special voting rounds of the Tesco Bags of Help local community grant scheme and offer a unique opportunity to help more people in England, Wales and Scotland. Voting for these grants will take place in July/August and November/December 2019. Following the vote, the project that receives the most votes in the voting region will receive a grant of up to £25,000, second place receiving up to £15,000 and third place up to £10,000.

There are also a variety of other grants available through Bags of Help, see: [https://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme](https://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme) for more information.

10. Just Giving Text Donations Closure
From the 31st March 2019, BCT will no longer be able to receive text donations via JustTextGiving. Details about the closure of this service are explained on the Just Giving website at: [https://justgiving-charity-support.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360012035573](https://justgiving-charity-support.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360012035573). BCT received a minimal amount of donations via text so we don’t believe the loss of this service will impact on our fundraising activities.

11. Training in Project Management & Strategy Development for Conservationists
WildTeam is a not-for-profit wildlife conservation charity which delivers training in skills for designing and implementing conservation projects of any size.
They have two workshop coming up in March that may be of interest to Bat Groups. The first is on Project Management for Wildlife Conservation and is also online, so is accessible from anywhere in the UK. The second is Strategy Development for Wildlife Conservation and is being run at Woodberry Wetlands nature reserve near Finsbury Park, London. Further details can be found at their website at: https://www.wildteam.org.uk/.

12. Bat Research Papers, Reports & Other Batty Media
Please note we normally only include bat related articles, reports and blogs in this section where they are available to read online or to download without charge. For more information about how to access journal papers (including details of a variety of relevant open access journals) see the BCT website at: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/training-and-conferences

- National Bat Helpline Out of Hours Report 2018 – This report includes information about how the Out of Hours Service (OOH) operates, the types of calls received and where those calls come from. 2018 was one of the busiest years ever for the OOH. A total of 48 volunteers took 2119 calls and donated a total of 1937 hours to bat conservation! A huge thank you to all of our volunteers. Read more at: https://cdn.bats.org.uk/pdf/Out-of-Hours-Helpline-Report-2018.pdf?mtime=20190102152126
- BCT’s Response to Defra’s Net Gain Consultation – This is now available from the BCT website at: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/biodiversity-policy-advocacy/advocacy-and-consultations
- The effect of a Welsh agri-environment scheme on bat activity: A large-scale study – This study by Angell et al didn’t find significant differences in overall bat activity between agri-environment scheme farms and control farms. The authors suggest schemes should be more targeted to effect positive responses in bat populations. Free access is provided to download a pdf of the paper until March 16th, see: https://authors.elsevier.com/a/1YSONcA-IW0Ze
- Bat Research Collection – The editors of the Journal of Mammalogy and Mammalian Species have selected a special collection of articles on the biology of bats from recent (2017-2018) issues of the journals. These articles are free to read for a limited time from: https://academic.oup.com/asm/pages/bat_research
- Higher fat stores contribute to persistence of little brown bat populations with white-nose syndrome – Cheng et al investigated the reasons why some populations of little brown bat have been able to persist despite infection with the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome. The full paper can be read online at: https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1365-2656.12954. The findings have also be summed up in an online article “Fat bats withstand the effects of white-nose syndrome” at: https://news.ucsc.edu/2019/02/bat-survival.html?ref=share
- Jammin’ at wind farms may help save bats – This article on Mongabay News explains that a new system being developed by NRG Systems and tested by researchers at Texas State University, in partnership with Bat Conservation International, may significantly reduce fatalities at wind farms. The article can be found online at: https://news.mongabay.com/2019/02/jammin-at-wind-turbines-may-help-save-bats/
- Two New Cryptic Bat Species within the Myotis nattereri Species Complex (Vespertilionidae, Chiroptera) from the Western Palaearctic – Juste et al offer a new taxonomic view of the cryptic species currently grouped as Natterer’s bat. See: https://bit.ly/2VnPYd9
- Proximity sensors on common noctule bats reveal evidence that mothers guide juveniles to roosts but not food – Ripperger et al used proximity sensors to understand the exchange of resource information (about roosts and foraging areas) between mothers and pups of noctules in a German forest. The full paper can be read at: https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsbl.2018.0884 and you can read a short summary of this at: https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-00544-9

13. Key Dates for Your Diary (Events, Conferences & Training)
Watch this space for dates and reminders of conferences, BCT training and other events you may be interested in. Please don’t forget you can get some extra publicity for your events by getting the details added to the BCT website, see online for more information.

BCT Events
- 16 March 2019 – South West Bat Conference, University of Exeter. **This Event is Fully Booked** but email Naomi Webster (nwebster@bats.org.uk) if you would like to go on the waiting list or you are interested in seeing filmed versions of the talks.
• 06 April 2019 – **North of England Bat Conference**, University of Lancaster. **This Event is Fully Booked** but email Naomi Webster (nwebster@bats.org.uk) if you would like to go on the waiting list. See the programme online at: [https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/conferences-symposia/english-regional-bat-conferences/north-of-england-bat-conference](https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/conferences-symposia/english-regional-bat-conferences/north-of-england-bat-conference)

• 11-12 May – **Wales Bat Worker’s Weekend** – Glyndwr University, Wrexham. Register your interest by emailing Naomi Webster at: nwebster@bats.org.uk


• 06 September 2019 – **Conservation & Technology Conference**, University of Nottingham. See the BCT website for further details [https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/conferences-symposia/conservation-and-technology-conference](https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/conferences-symposia/conservation-and-technology-conference) and to register your interest in the event, email Naomi Webster at: nwebster@bats.org.uk


**BCT Training**


• 13 April – **QGIS for Bat Groups** – Lockington Hall, Derby [https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/training-and-conferences/training-for-volunteers-beginners/qgis-for-bat-groups](https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/training-and-conferences/training-for-volunteers-beginners/qgis-for-bat-groups)


• 16-17 May – **Surveying for Bats** – Nettlecombe Court, Somerset [https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/training-and-conferences/training-for-ecologists/surveying-for-bats](https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/training-and-conferences/training-for-ecologists/surveying-for-bats)


• 26 October – **QGIS for Bat Groups** – NSBRC, Swindon [https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/training-and-conferences/training-for-volunteers-beginners/qgis-for-bat-groups](https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/training-and-conferences/training-for-volunteers-beginners/qgis-for-bat-groups)


**Other Events**


• 28 July-01 August 2019 – **18th International Bat Research Conference** (18th IBRC), The Slate, Phuket, Thailand. For more information see the event website [https://www.ibrc2019.com/](https://www.ibrc2019.com/). (There are travel grants available for this conference, a BCI grant aimed specifically for developing countries but also an open grant for anyone who meets the criteria, see the IBRC 2019 website [https://ibrc2019.com/scholarship.html](https://ibrc2019.com/scholarship.html) for more details)

• 12 – 13 November 2019 – Communicate, Bristol Zoo. The UK's conference for environmental communicators. For more information see: https://www.bnhc.org.uk/communicate/communicate-2019/

Back issues of the bulletin (a rolling 12-months) are available on the BCT website at https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/resources-for-bat-groups/bat-group-bulletin and following requests from bat groups we are now adding the latest bulletin on the day it is circulated to bat groups.

Finally, the bat group bulletin is also available as a PDF file. If your group would like to receive a PDF copy in future please let me know.

Kind regards,
Lisa.

If you wish to alter your contact preferences, including to opt-out of receiving future communications from us, please contact me by either calling 020 7820 7176 or emailing lworledge@bats.org.uk (if you are receiving this Bulletin forwarded to you by your bat group, please contact the bat group directly rather than emailing me).

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National Bat Helpline: 0345 1300 228 (hours of service are 09.30 to 16.30, Monday to Friday)

There are dedicated Bat Group pages on the BCT website at: www.bats.org.uk/pages/resources_for_bat_groups.html
Find us on: www.bats.org.uk | Facebook | Twitter | Instagram

Get involved and help BCT conserve the UK's bats and their habitats by joining BCT as a member, or remember us by leaving a gift in your Will.