



Our wildlife and countryside is precious. It needs to be looked after not just for its own sake, but also because it provides some of the essential things we need. For hundreds of years, people have used the environment without thinking about the effects of their actions.

As demands on resources grow with increased industrialisation and growing world populations, environmental systems are at risk. For many animals and plants biodiversity is at a critically low level. The World Conservation Strategy was updated in 1991 and renamed 'Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living.' It suggests guidelines aimed at sustainability and the preservation of biodiversity.

In 2016 the Welsh Government set out a Nature Recovery Plan aimed at addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity, by managing the climate, energy, waste, water and land in ways that will protect our natural environment. We need both the 'carrot' and the 'stick' but we also need to tell people why these things are important, and to make sure that what we do is working. (See *Why People Need Bats and Survey and Monitoring*)

Policy



Governments and their nature conservation organisations issue guidelines to help other people who make decisions that might affect wildlife. For example, in Wales there is a Planning Policy Wales document which is supported by special Technical Advice Notes for nature conservation. PPW sets out the broad principles and TANs go into more detail. Together that tells planning authorities how to take account of wildlife when considering applications to build houses and roads. (See *Bats and the Law*)

Finance

We need to encourage landowners to manage our countryside differently. About 80% of Wales is farmland and since the end of the Second World War, farming practices have had a significant impact on our environment and landscape. It is government policies that have pushed farming to produce more food and to make farmland more productive. By offering money to farmers to help them change the way they farm (the carrot) it is possible to make space for nature to thrive as well as produce food.

Education

The study of nature, wildlife and ecology form part of schools teaching and curriculum. The voluntary sector plays a major role in educating the public about bats and other wildlife too. The Bat Conservation Trust is the leading NGO solely devoted to the conservation of bats and the landscapes on which they rely, and education forms a significant element of their work. This can take several forms from publications, information on web sites, as well as providing public walks and talks. Many other bodies also do these things. BCT runs a telephone helpline service that receives over 15,000 enquiries a year from all over the UK. This answers questions and provides immediate and friendly advice. (www.bats.org.uk/pages/helpline.html)

Nature conservation strategies can be thought of along five main strands:

regulation using the Law

government policy

financial incentives

monitoring

education



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Explain the meaning of:

Biodiversity
Sustainability
Incentive

NGOs – with some examples

Monitoring

There are two main reasons why we need to monitor our wildlife. Firstly our government needs to know if their policies are working or not, and secondly we need to know how and where our wildlife is doing as that is an indication of how we are treating our environment. (See *Surveying and Monitoring*)



Regulation using the Law

Before 1980 most UK bats were considered pests, and could be removed or killed legally if they were felt to be a nuisance. However, the huge decline in their numbers after World War I gave rise to such concern that when the Wildlife and Countryside Act was passed in 1981, greater protection was given to bats than any other animal. Most significantly, not only are the bats themselves protected by law, but because they use such a wide range of roosting places (see *Bats through the year*) their roosts too are protected, even if the bats are not present.

Species protection

In short, it is a criminal offence to capture, kill or injure a bat, to disturb a bat, to damage or destroy a bat roost, to be in possession or control of a bat whether it is alive or dead. There are exemptions or defences to this which include having a licence, and if the animal is sick or injured. Some European Protected Species are also listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act. If an offence is reported, it is the responsibility of the police to investigate and the Crown Prosecuting Service to prosecute.

Licences can only be issued under certain criteria:

- there must be a good reason for the activities
- there must be no other satisfactory alternative
- the action allowed must not have an adverse impact on the conservation status of the bats.

The protection of bats under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 came as a result of the **Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats 1979**.

In 1992 the **United Nations Convention of Biological Diversity** was agreed. The UK was a signatory to the CBD as was the European Union. It is down to Member States as to how they implement and achieve the aims of the CBD. The EU agreed to do this through the **Habitats Directive**. The Directive was originally implemented in the UK through the **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 1994** but it has been amended a few times since.



Pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat roosts were destroyed when this building was demolished without permission. The person responsible was fined £1500 for each species plus costs.