

Bat Conservation Trust



Pete Guest Award 2025 Nominations

Background

The Pete Guest Award is given in memory of Pete Guest who was an inspirational figure in the bat conservation movement for more than 20 years. Each year, the bat world is invited to nominate people who have made an outstanding practical contribution to bat conservation. The criteria for the award includes: dedication, innovation, enthusiasm and inspiration in making a difference, both to bats and to people, helping make BCT's vision become a reality.

Previous winners of the award are:

2024. John Kaczanow
2023. Steve Roe
2022. Morgan Hughes
2021. Tony Atkinson
2020. Michelle Young
2019. Gail Armstrong
2018. Steve and Fiona Parker
2017. Donna & Graham Street
2016. James Shipman
2015. Arthur Rivett
2014. Colin Morris
2013. Maggie Brown
2012. Daniel Hargreaves
2011. Peter & Maggie Andrews
2010. Roger Ransome
2009. Sue Swift
2008. Tom McOwat
2007. Phil Burkinshaw
2006. John Hadow
2005. Phil Richardson
2004. Tony Hutson
2003. Jenny Clark*
2002. Shirley Thompson*



* BCT set up an award for "Outstanding voluntary contribution to bat conservation" in 2002, winners received a framed picture. Following Pete's death, the Trustees proposed a new award in Pete's name as a way of honouring his contribution to bat conservation. They also proposed that a formal trophy be sculptured, first awarded in 2004. This then replaced the award set-up in 2002.

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This Year's Nominations

A total of two bat workers have been nominated for the Pete Guest Award in 2025:

| Name |
|----------------|
| Conor Kelleher |
| Tony Stimpson |

Supporting statements submitted with nominations are enclosed in **appendices 1-3**.

How to Vote

- Please use the online voting form to register your vote:
<https://forms.office.com/e/THd2iUbXQG>
- Votes are limited to one per person. You are only allowed to vote once for one nominee. Your name and email address will be stored by BCT solely for the purpose of regulating voting and will be deleted after presentation of the award.
- Voting close at **5pm Monday 25th August**.

The Decision Process

The nominee with the greatest number of votes will be announced at the [National Bat Conference](#), 5-7 September 2025. Should the winner be unable to attend the conference to receive the award in person, alternative arrangements will be made to deliver the award to the recipient.

As well as being announced at the event, the winner will be invited to give their acceptance speech at the online free-to-attend [Bat Workers Forum](#), on Thursday 23rd October. News of the award will also be posted on the BCT website, BCT social media, in the member magazine Bat News and via email communication to bat groups.

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Appendix 1. Supporting statement 1 for Conor Kelleher

Katy Steele

Katy's Wildlife Rescues

Conor Kelleher has over 30 years of experience in bat research and conservation in Ireland, the UK and mainland Europe. He has written many articles and papers on bats and given lectures at conferences both in Ireland and abroad. Conor was a lecturer at University College Cork and University College Dublin. He was involved in drafting the National Roads Authority Guidelines on Bat Conservation during the Planning and Construction of Road Schemes and also co-authored the Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland for the Irish Government. He was past Secretary of the UK Bat Conservation Trust and a founding member and Chairman of the Cork County Bat Group and Bat Conservation Ireland. Conor was also Chairman of the Irish Wildlife Trust, and as part of such voluntary positions, he has organised and participated in several national bat conferences and national and international bat workshops in both the UK and Ireland. He has previously been part of the Heritage Council's Bat Specialist Panel and the Ecologist Panel of the National Parks and Wildlife.

In 2009, Conor co-produced an interactive DVD on Irish bats entitled 'Knowing, Studying and Conserving the Bats of Ireland' and is currently writing a book entitled: 'The Bats of Ireland - Natural History, Ecology and Conservation'. "He discovered and helped protect hundreds of bat roosts across Ireland, in times when people were less open to conservation, let alone inspections.

Conor is a remarkable man. Even though he has had to retire due to illness, he continues to enthusiastically share his knowledge. We know each other through my rehabilitation of bats, and since studying Ecology, recently, he offered to generously tutor me, free of charge, on 8 modules of Bat ecology. Thanks to him, I'm trained in a level of Bat Ecology along with Ecology in general and Bat rehabilitation now. His limited mobility due to his illness did not stop him happily spending hours out at night teaching me various methods of surveying at night. He's a truly remarkable man, he is humble and does not ever gloat about his fantastic achievements and publications.

He is truly a bat hero, and this award would be so well deserved with him.

I am honoured to know Conor Kelleher and to learn from him.

Bats in Ireland and elsewhere would not have had quite the level of public appreciation and awareness without him.

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Appendix 2. Supporting statement 2 for Conor Kelleher

Susan Kerwin

Founder of Bat Rehabilitation Ireland

Conor Kelleher is a true gentleman and very much admired by anyone who has had the pleasure to work with him. His passion for bats is infectious and inspiring. After retiring several years ago due to illness, Conor still continues to share his vast knowledge with communities through bat surveys, presentations, bat walks and also provides free training for both junior and senior ecologists who wish to specialise in bats. Conor is a true bat champion.

Since meeting Conor in 2019, when I founded Bat Rehabilitation Ireland, a bat rescue and registered charity based in County Limerick, he has been not only a mentor to me but also a great friend. In December 2022, Conor personally trained me and supported my license application to ring bats that had been in care. Together, we initiated Ireland's largest ringing project, the first of its kind, to study the longevity and movement of Irish bats. To date, we have ringed and released nearly 600 bats from across the country. We are also very proud to count him as a valued member of the BRI committee.

Conor has provided unwavering support throughout my journey to establish BRI as the largest, most well-known, and respected bat rescue in the country. His steadfast commitment to expanding our team's understanding of the critical need for mitigation efforts to protect bats, roost sites, and habitats from threats posed by human development and infrastructure projects has been invaluable. This support has enabled us to offer guidance and assistance to communities and individuals, ensuring the protection of bats and their roost sites.

Conor has significantly influenced many of Ireland's current ecologists, bat specialists, and conservationists in their career paths. As one of Ireland's most senior and long-standing bat specialists, I believe he would be an exceptional candidate for this prestigious award.

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Appendix 3. Supporting statement for Tony Stimpson

Lisa Phipps

Nene Valley Bat Group/Oxfordshire Bat Group

Tony is a member of Nene Valley bat group with an in-depth knowledge of sound recording and analysis of bats. His dedication to using sound analysis, not only to recording the presence of bats in his own area and wider Northamptonshire but also supporting others to do so is truly inspirational.

I first met Tony when I started sound analysis of bats myself and in need of some help with this. Sounds analysis can be incredibly daunting to the beginner, the complexities and nuances of interpreting the outputs can be confusing but are necessary in order for the results to be of value in bat conservation. Tony gave his time freely, both to talk about his own recording and share his own knowledge but also to listen to the surveying that was being undertaken and to answer questions, no matter how basic or novice any question is, Tony is so passionate about bats and shares his knowledge to enthuse others.

Tony has a detailed and historic record of bat presence in his own area and regularly surveys other areas around the county, either alone, with others or supporting events such as Nene Valley Bat Group organised walks. Tony also reviews records from other members of the Nene Valley Bat Group as well as supporting the group as county recorders by reviewing wider records submitted. Tony not only encouraged me with our own surveying, he took the time to survey with me and inspired us to install bat boxes, which incredibly supported hibernating bats during their first winter following installation.

Tony is passionate about using sound analysis to really understand the presence of bats and inspire others. Effective bat conservation and protection relies on good quality records and Tony is certainly having an impact on this as well as inspiring others to contribute too.

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