

# Annual Review

1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023





## Message from the President

Welcome! Once again we've seen a busy year of activities highlighting the vital work and progress being made on bat conservation. I'll begin with the heartening news from our National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP), which showed that, at the national scale, some of Britain's bat populations continue to recover slowly from historical declines. This is thanks to legal protection and conservation action, and highlights the invaluable work of the Bat Conservation Trust, bat groups and our many brilliant supporters. However we must stay vigilant – it's a mixed picture and our bat populations still have a long way to go on their recovery. One third of Britain's most highly threatened mammal species are bats. The full NBMP results are on our website.

I'd like to encourage everyone to take part in our citizen science surveys. There are NBMP surveys suitable for all levels of experience and new technology is allowing us to get more people involved in capturing even more data. I warmly welcome seeing the progress made this year on widening diversity and inclusion in who takes part, long may this continue.

In 2023 we were saddened to hear of the death of one of BCT's co-founders, Tony Hutson. We will all miss him. Tony made a huge contribution to bat conservation. He was the UK's first bat conservation officer and an author with an encyclopaedic knowledge. You can listen to him on a recent BatChat podcast. Tony helped to create the NBMP, the Eurobats agreement and BatLife Europe as well as bat groups and other bat conservation organisations. For 20 years he also monitored Britain's famous solo individual greater mouse-eared bat as part of Sussex Bat Group – he lived to see the known English population double to two individuals.

BCT has again been supporting and leading some outstanding cutting edge science and developing great conservation projects. I am looking forward to seeing the results of ongoing work with PhD students in areas such as insect population declines, ecosystem services, climate change and the use of bat boxes in differing landscapes.

I am excited to see two new projects in Wales – 'Natur am Byth' (Nature Forever) and 'Gobaith Coetir' (Woodland Hope) to save rare species and reconnect communities with nature, as well as giving a boost to precious diminished Celtic rainforests and their wildlife.

With scientific understanding being so vital and ever urgent, I applaud the important and complex ongoing work BCT's team is doing in collaboration with international partners on tackling relentless public misinformation around bats in relation to health and diseases and it is great to hear there is new funding to expand this work.

A huge cheer for the National Bat Helpline which again fielded thousands of enquiries from the public seeking advice around bat conservation or injured bats. This year their work was expanded, with trained volunteers handling most bat care calls, which saw huge demand.

BCT's small staff team and invaluable supporters continue to deliver impressive outreach and education work too, and this year's mix of training, conferences, talks, BatFest, plus the stories I have seen in Bat News and Young Batworker magazines, in the news and shared on social media are an asset to everyone's work in spreading the love, care and endless fascination for bats.

Chris Packham CBE, President, Bat Conservation Trust

# Review by the Chair and Chief Executive

Policy and advocacy has been a crucial area of work in the past year, and we have welcomed a new Species Advocacy and Policy Officer. Bats and wildlife more generally have been facing serious threats due to proposed changes to the planning system, the Retained EU Law Bill and other deregulatory initiatives. We wrote a piece for Wildlife and Countryside Link to dispel some of the myths around bat protection and planning, and joined with other charities and NGOs in campaigning against the proposed changes to the law. Our supporters joined us in a campaign with more than 100 people writing to their MPs to emphasise the importance of maintaining the Habitats Regulations.

As ever we, and our brilliant supporters, spent time responding to media misinformation and inaccurate articles on a variety of issues around bats. Several misleading articles in leading publications and websites wrongly dismissed the role of wildlife legislation and planning policies in protecting wildlife. These articles promoted policy and law changes that would seriously impact bat conservation.

At the time of writing, the Retained EU Law Bill was due to receive Royal Assent following several sessions in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. We will continue to work with our NGO partners to try to reduce or remove any negative impacts of the Bill (to become Act) on wildlife conservation and bat protection.

We are delighted that we have a new Agriculture Officer in place, as this is another key area of policy. They will build on our 'on the ground' work with farmers and landowners and ensure BCT is well placed to support farmers through the transition in agri-environment schemes.

BCT has always majored in partnership working. In addition to the fantastic Welsh projects mentioned by Chris Packham, this year saw the start of an exciting collaborative species recovery project in Scotland – Species on the Edge. It will be delivered by Rethink Nature (seven species conservation charities) and NatureScot. The vision is to work with local communities in some of Scotland's most remote areas to establish projects that improve the fortunes of 37 priority species found along Scotland's coast and islands.

Our Bats in Churches project is at the other end of its journey this year. The project has seen huge success with 753 churches in England being surveyed over the four years by volunteers – with some great finds, such as the discovery of two new roosts for the very rare grey long-eared bat. More details will be shared in 2023 and used to inform guidance to church communities on bat conservation in future years. Other successes have included working with more than 100 churches to help find good solutions on sharing their church spaces with bats.

Improving our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) has remained important. We worked on the Wildlife and Countryside Link Route Map to address the lack of ethnic diversity in the sector, and with the help of a newly appointed Education and Engagement Officer and our EDI working group, are starting to implement the recommendations. We have also secured funding to recruit paid interns through the Kickstarter and New To Nature schemes and are applying learning from these to improve our recruitment practices

We would like to say a sincere thank you to everyone who supports our work – our staff, volunteers, partners, donors, supporters, members and many others. We have been developing a new strategy which will be launched later in 2023, and we very much look forward to sharing this and working with you to deliver it.



Jean Matthews, Chair, Board of Trustees



Kit Stoner, Chief Executive



# Our vision



The Bat Conservation Trust is the leading UK charity devoted solely to championing bats and the places they need to survive. Our vision is a world rich in wildlife where bats and people thrive together. Our mission is to conserve bats for present and future generations. Through education, inspiration, collaborative action and scientific research we inspire individuals and organisations to value and speak out for bats.

**Discover:** We ensure scientific evidence is in place to support bat conservation.

**Act:** We take conservation actions and influence policy.

**Inspire:** We train, engage and educate diverse audiences to secure a good future for bats.

**Strengthen:** We invest in a sustainable future for bat conservation.

## Woodland secrets revealed

### **Our work provides important insights into forest bats**

The importance of woodlands for bats is understudied. To put this right, we are building on our cutting edge science, with exciting new work.

We are using revolutionary low-cost technology to undertake our largest acoustic monitoring project of bats in woodlands.

This year, our collaboration with Forest Research and Forestry England has used new methods to monitor bat populations and woodland ecosystem health across 39 National Forest and Forestry England sites. It will track trends as forest restoration progresses.

And our Fascinating World of Woodland – Bechstein's bat project illuminated this secretive species' little known use of landscapes. This crucial work will continue in 2023 to help conservationists understand its needs.

Radiotracking by Somerset and Dorset bat groups continued, and we were also busy with barbastelle bat trials across two of their important woodland homes as part of the National Bat Monitoring Programme.

We are developing solar powered technology with experts in machine learning, with more field tests planned to refine sound tools used in forests.

This work informs better woodland management for wildlife, advances conservation and enables us to discover more about the bats living in forests and will help towards informing the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.



## NightWatch: discover urban wildlife

NightWatch is a community science project that helps people discover the hidden world of night-time wildlife in their neighbourhood. It is perfect for those new to bat surveys and living in urban parts of the UK.

A key aim for this project is to increase engagement with people from urban and ethnic minority communities. So far, 456 people have taken part, one fifth of whom have been from ethnic minority communities. NightWatch is also generating valuable wildlife records.



*Deployed audio moth bat detector*

### New for 2023

We now have five NightWatch Champions who have been recruited from the communities we are working with and help to co-design and direct the project. And in 2023 we will create a guide to night-time wildlife. Plus we are making an app so NightWatchers can easily upload recordings to our sound classification system.

Nightwatch is run with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.



## Solving mysteries: new pilot survey

A second British Bat Survey pilot was launched in July 2022, funded by JNCC. Set to be part of the National Bat Monitoring Programme by 2025, this study will improve how we monitor the health of British bats across the UK. It will also help us map population trends. We have appointed two staff and surveyed 96 sites. A 2023 survey launch is planned for mid-May with an online survey portal to support volunteers.

## Exciting new science

Our science research continues with partnerships and support on important new studies.

- The DRUID project is looking at the causes and consequences of UK insect population declines. It will examine links between changes in insect populations and the species that eat them, including bats and birds. This research is with the University of Leeds, the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, the University of Reading and Rothamsted Research.
- Research on long-term changes in migrating insects as potential drivers of population changes in birds and bats – with Hannah Romanowski at Rothamsted Research.
- The use of DNA analysis of prey droppings to uncover ecosystem benefits provided by UK bats and the impacts of climate change on 37 bat species across Europe – with Penelope Fialas at University of Exeter.
- Looking at how bats use bat boxes across 60 landscapes, and comparing how the land is managed, using long-term bat box records – with Eleri Kent at Stirling University.



## Fragile wins...

### Update on the vital work of our National Bat Monitoring Programme

While several British bats remain at risk of extinction, good news was confirmed for some – but not all – species this year, showing encouraging continuing signs of slow recovery. Bat populations in the last century showed serious declines, so there is still a long way to go to guarantee the long-term recovery of bats in the UK. However, the National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP) data shows current laws and conservation appear to be successful. As such, it is vital these protections continue.

Among the most heartening results from our world-leading NBMP were rises in two of our rarest bats, the greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe. In the 1900s they had disappeared from many areas.

Counts rose for Natterer's bat, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle too. Populations of Daubenton's bat, noctule, brown long-eared bat, serotine and whiskered/Brandt's bats appear stable overall across Britain, compared to 1999. However, a closer look shows a mixed picture, with regional variation, so we will be investigating further.

Kit Stoner, our CEO, said: "Britain's bat species are not out of the woods yet – some are still too rare or elusive to monitor reliably and it's only thanks to so many wonderful, dedicated volunteers that we now have a clearer picture of where we are achieving better bat conservation and where efforts need to increase. Some recorded bats are too sparse or challenging to monitor to show trends, including Bechstein's bat, grey long-eared, barbastelle, Nathusius' pipistrelle, and Alcahoë's bat. We only know of two individual greater mouse-eared bats in Britain, although this doubles last year's count of one single bat!"

### Opportunities

Bat detector and sound analysis workshops were again run online this year alongside in-person sessions. We trained 653 volunteer surveyors and held 20 workshops. We are redeveloping the NBMP online recording portal, which is expected to go live in April 2024. Our new NBMP Volunteer Engagement Officer starts in April 2023.

Our NBMP results provide vital information used by Government and conservation bodies to inform conservation and policy. The NBMP is run by us in partnership with JNCC, and supported and steered by Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage.

*Bat detectors enable people to listen to bat calls*



## Crime busting

Britain remains largely in the dark on the full extent of its wildlife crimes. The Bat Conservation Trust sees this as a problem – how can our country tackle crimes we know too little about?

To address this, we have been working alongside other wildlife organisations and met with the Home Office to put Britain's wildlife crime more clearly in the picture, by working towards creating an official 'notifiable status' for reported crimes.

This would require all police forces to provide figures to the Home Office. It would mean all wildlife crime records get centrally collected in one database. At present there is no clear and available nationwide information on the details and trends of wildlife crimes or the effectiveness of measures in tackling them. A central system would enable more evidence-based decisions on targeting resources and priorities.

Our work on this follows a recommendation in 2021 by the United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime report.

### Prosecutions

During 2022 we advised police on 84 bat crime incidents. There were significant prosecutions including a Metropolitan Police case after the destruction of a bat roost resulting in £10,249 in fines and costs against the defendant. Our team also works on bat crime prevention through education and training, and enforcement when needed.

During the past year BCT's wildlife crime project provided expertise to the police on 136 wildlife crime cases. January 2022 saw the release of new advice for police on investigating bat crime.



**84 crimes**



**135 ten-year average**



**68% of ten-year offences were roost damage/ destruction**

## Policy champions

Our policy work has included campaigning, letters, reports and briefings to ministers, and our political Species Champions are helping us bring positive engagement on bat conservation.

Policy challenges and opportunities have included key pieces of legislation such as the Retained EU Law Bill, changes to the planning system, Environment Act 2021, Environmental Improvement Plan, United Nations Biodiversity Summit (COP15) and Global Biodiversity Framework.

Policy issues continued from last year included Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies. We have worked on the National Planning Policy Framework, Biodiversity Net Gain, National Parks, Biodiversity Strategy, agricultural policy, offshore energy assessment, wildlife trapping and environmental assessment.



## Helping farmers

This year we have recruited an Agriculture Officer to engage with this vital community of bat guardians. The role will enable broader work with farmers at a time when the sector is moving through great transition. How the land is farmed is crucial in confronting the biodiversity crisis.

We have been working with the Farm Wildlife and the Nature Friendly Farming Network, agriculture groups of Wildlife Countryside Link (England) and Cyswllt Amgylchedd Cymru Wales Environment Link (WEL).

We are planning more projects with farmers on the ground next year, similar to our work in south and east Devon as part of the 'Back from the Brink' grey long-eared bat project which ended in 2022.

As the UK moves away from the European Common Agricultural Policy, BCT's work with farmers and evolving schemes and land owners in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is imperative.



## We want inclusion

BCT is committed to champion equity, diversity and inclusion throughout all our work. We have made some progress towards engaging a wider range of volunteers with our citizen science projects. We have also had paid interns, provided anti-oppression training to all our staff, made events more inclusive and have incorporated talks on this topic at our conferences. We continue to work with others in the sector to implement a route map to address lack of diversity.





## That's 400 more bat friendly churches!

With help from hundreds of volunteers, we surveyed over 400 churches during the summer of 2022! In total, the Bats in Churches project surveyed 753 churches over the four years thanks to our two citizen science surveys.

We are now analysing the valuable information from all those church visits. The findings will be shared in 2023 and used to inform guidance to church communities on bat conservation.

And we know that many people caring for churches are now interested to know more about the species of bats that live among their community. We will lend them our equipment and sound analysis skills in summer 2023 to help them discover more about their winged guests.

BCT has led on the citizen science and training elements of Bats in Churches. We have seen more than 250 people take part in the training, including 29 events in 2022. These included cleaning workshops and skills and knowledge building for the NBMP and Volunteer Bat Roost Visitor. We've also seen hundreds of people use online e-learning created by Bats in Churches.

Training was far ahead of targets and the programme has increased longer term bat survey capacity, with thanks to good numbers of new people joining the NBMP and VBRV.

This year will include a series of Bats in Churches LIVE webinars plus more training and engagement events at churches. In September 2023 there will be a celebration event in London for policy makers, and those who have given their time to the success of the Bats in Churches Project. Ending in November 2023 after four years, this project will leave a legacy for years to come.

## Bats and health

Fear and persecution of bats is an ongoing conservation threat. We work to overcome misunderstandings, and to safeguard the health of bats, people and ecosystems.

Crucial to this is the work we do to counter widespread public and media misinformation. We do this with strong, science-led advice and communication work around bats, health and disease.

This year we worked extensively on improving understanding of human-to-bat and bat-to-human health risks. We ran workshops and talks, produced guidance to the public, the media, our volunteers and bat workers, through our member magazines, professional publications, newsletters, our website, social media, talks, meetings and conferences nationally and internationally.

We have been working with scientists and other specialists around the world on bat ecology, health, virology and immunology, and on producing international guidelines. And we have continued working with government bodies and academic researchers on disease research, surveillance and communication.

This work has covered rabies, white-nose syndrome, COVID-19 / SARS-CoV-2 and biosecurity.

We are looking to secure resources to expand this important area of work.



*The International Bat Research Conference was held in Austin Texas where Bracken Cave is found. A roost to 15 million Mexican free-tailed bats*

## Education and outreach

Online activity is a great way to engage with wider audiences. Our platforms raise awareness on bats and their conservation with professionals, academics, enthusiasts and the general public. BCT's social media following keeps growing.

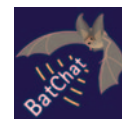
Our engagement with children continues thanks to The Young Batworker magazine led by BCT's Honorary Education Officer, Shirley Thompson, and our social media presence. We also offer free resources on our website including a bilingual educational pack (Welsh and English). This year we have recruited an Education and Engagement Officer to enable us to both develop our resources and expand our engagement capacity which is such a vital part of our work.

 **124,000** followers on Facebook

 **56,500** followers on Twitter

 **27,000** followers on Instagram

 **8,000** followers on LinkedIn



Over **6265** downloads of Season 4 of the BatChat podcast, **54,000** overall

 **560** subscribers

 **29** online news pieces

 **3** blogs

## Training and conferences

We delivered 36 training courses this year, for hundreds of people, online and in person. For example we held workshops for developers in May 2022 on bats, landscaping and lighting, with Vistry Group.

We held a Built Environment Consultants Forum in January 2023 for 150 ecological consultants, on policy and licensing. We trained hundreds of police officers and lectured criminology students at Plymouth University. We held BatFest, the National Bat Conference and South West of England Bat Conference as hybrid events together attracting over 500 people.



# Helpline



Our National Bat Helpline fielded over 10,800 calls, emails and letters in 2022-23. It provides advice to anyone interested in bats and their roosts.

Throughout summer the trained dedicated volunteers on our Volunteer Bat Care Helpline provided out-of-hours welfare advice during evenings and weekends to anyone who found grounded, injured and orphaned bats. They handled over 6,000 enquiries during 2022-23.

Helpline staff organised 680 roost visits for Natural England and advised on 1,400 further enquiries not needing a visit. The Natural England casework is an enormously important part of our work, which would not be possible without the dedication and flexibility of volunteer bat roost visitors.

The Helpline advised on calls from various sectors, for example giving expert advice and training to church communities and the Bats in Churches project. We also hosted a blog of stories, news and best practice for the UK Bat Care Network who rescue bats and we began offering lunchtime online talks.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Helpline with time, expertise or donations. It is extremely valuable to the conservation of bats in the UK.



# Membership

BCT members not only help to fund our work, they are our partners in that work. We work with them to create a world where bats and people thrive together.

Members receive BCT magazines three times a year. Corporate members receive advance opportunities for sponsoring projects, events and publications. Our popular Adopt a Bat scheme provides an alternative route for supporting bat conservation without becoming a member.



## Congratulations to these award winners!

### Kate Barlow Award

The 2023 Kate Barlow Award was awarded to Oliver Aylen. His PhD research at the University of New South Wales,



Australia, investigates how fenced reserves and artificial bat boxes affect bat predation, food supply and roost sites.

Since European colonisation, Australia has been altered by land-use change, the introduction of non native herbivores and predators and the removal of native predators. This has had multiple impacts on native bat populations.

### Vincent Weir Scientific Award

Joint winners in 2022 were Ella Browning (University College London & Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society London) and Roberto Novella Fernandez (University of Southampton).



Ella researched bat population trends in the UK. She identified gaps in the evidence of drivers of bat population change, which showed that the impacts of many purported drivers, such as climate change and protective legislation, were poorly understood.



Roberto investigated the trophic ecology of *Myotis escalerai* and *Myotis crypticus* and how local food chains can affect coexistence between these two forest bats.

### Pete Guest Award



Congratulations to Morgan Hughes, this year's winner of the Pete Guest Award. It is given annually to an individual who has made an outstanding practical contribution to bat conservation. In 2022 three bat workers were nominated and over 300 votes were received.



## New hope in Wales / Gobaith Coetir

In 2023 we launch a two-year project in north Wales to help some of Britain's rarest bats and precious Celtic rainforest. All 15 bat species found in Wales use woodland for roosting, foraging or commuting.

'Gobaith Coetir – Woodland Hope' runs until March 2025 and focuses on priority sessile oak woods, alder alluvial forest, bog woodland and their bats. Wales has one of the lowest woodland covers in Europe and at least 80% of them are in unfavourable condition. Local people will be invited to take part in citizen science and offered training using low cost AudioMoth technology, to monitor bats in innovative ways. This new knowledge will be used to inform woodland recovery work. This project is funded by the Nature Networks Fund, via the Heritage Fund, on behalf of the Welsh Government.

The Natur am Byth project is co-ordinated by Natural Resources Wales in partnership with nine species charities, including BCT. This project will become Wales' largest natural heritage and outreach programme to save species from extinction and reconnect people to nature. The Swansea Bay Stars of the Night will focus on conserving Wales' important lesser horseshoe bats. The project looks to tackle barriers to their free movement and engage the local community. A monitoring plan has been created, following work with Glamorgan Bat Group.

## Supporting bat groups

We have increased support for bat groups through more training and resources. And we've showcased their wonderful work through the Mapping the Bat Groups project. We support 84 groups in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. Three grant awards were made this year totalling £1,200, plus talks, training, outreach materials, insurance, advice, networking, a monthly bulletin, meetings, regional conferences and the annual Bat Workers Forum.

## Health and the power of storytelling

'Don't Blame Bats – Setting The Story Straight' is a collaborative project funded by the Rufford Foundation. Using storytelling techniques, it will provide accessible and science-led content to tackle the misuse of research findings.

## Genetics

Alongside NatureMetrics we have been exploring novel techniques using DNA sampling to monitor bat in roosts, swarms, churches and woodlands. This includes air sampling, droppings and collecting other genetic material to decipher patterns of genetic diversity, populations, landscape variability, connectivity and historic populations. We are also collaborating with the University of Exeter on using novel genetic methods. Early findings on barbastelles show promising results.



Barbastelle



# We are expanding our work in Scotland

We are delighted to be expanding our work in Scotland. Our Scottish Bat Project, funded by NatureScot, will work with bat groups, communities and other partners to build a better picture of the *Nathusius' pipistrelle* bats' range. We will focus on hot spots with field surveys, harp trapping, radiotracking and ringing. We will run a month of training events and continue working with Scottish bat groups, volunteers, landowners and land managers.

This project will work alongside the Species on the Edge partnership, with NatureScot and seven nature conservation charities funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. In order to improve the fortunes of 37 priority coastal and island species, we will work with some of Scotland's most remote communities. We are leading on the Protecting Scotland's Island Wonders project, to learn more about bats on Skye, Argyll and Inner Hebrides, Outer Hebrides, Orkney, Solway and the East Coast.

In 2023 we launch our bat monitoring strategy, with landowners, bat groups and other community groups, and teams across Argyll, Inner Hebrides and Skye. We will train young people to design and create an audio trail on Skye, to celebrate their magnificent wildlife. The Scottish Bat Project has already been working with 11 volunteer bat groups and NBMP volunteers to increase knowledge of the nine bat species found in Scotland and tackle conservation threats.



*Nathusius' pipistrelle* bat

© Hugh Clark

## Internationally...



We've been busy working with Eurobats partners on monitoring, indicators, pollution, climate change, insect declines, bat rescue, sound analysis and drafting guidelines on insulation. We are discussing a future European biodiversity monitoring centre and new science communication plans. With BatLife Europe we will contribute to webinars, social media, an EU Bat Action Plan and a pan-European project with 37 partners.

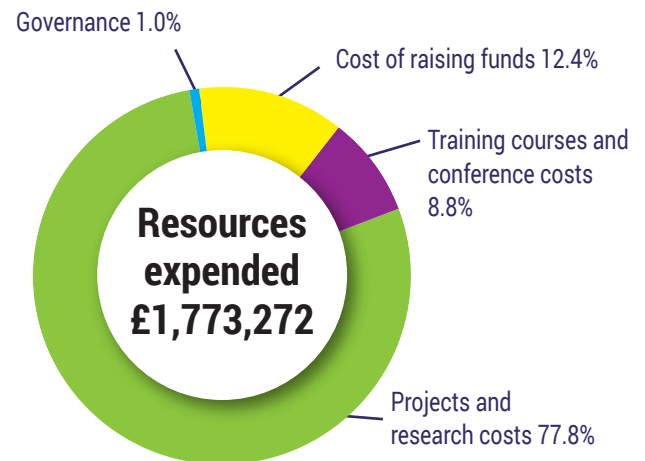
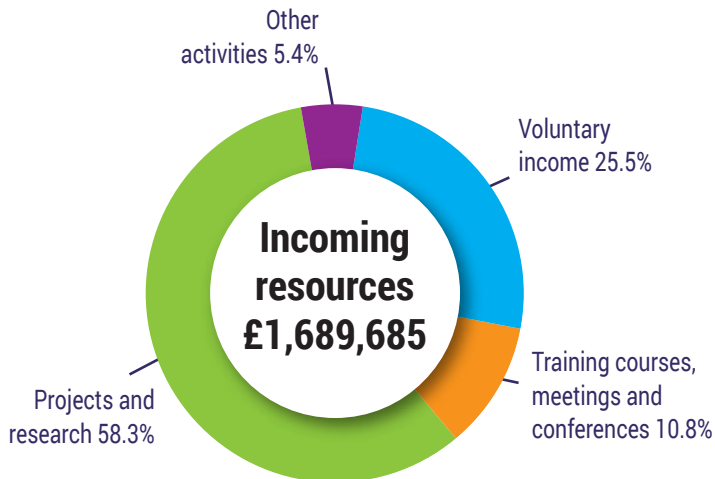
## Jersey

We plan some spatial analysis work to inform bat monitoring on Jersey, having partnered with the Government of Jersey to analyse ten years of acoustic data, making recommendations for a comprehensive monitoring programme.

## Guidance

- A fourth edition of 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines' will be published in 2023.
- We worked with an ecological consultant on guidelines for bat surveys with infrared cameras.
- Guidance will be published in 2023 on bat surveys for large-scale maintenance projects, after the work has been reviewed by statutory nature conservation bodies.
- The 'Bat Mitigation Guidelines' are being updated. Publication is expected in the next few months.
- A working group on autumn bat swarming, priorities for future research and other actions will be set up in 2023.
- With industry experts, we have updated the artificial lighting guidance. It will be available free to download soon via the lighting page on our website.
- We maintain the Biodiversity in Planning website and Wildlife Assessment Checklist. In the year up to March there were 10,584 users.
- We are developing a Sound Classification System, including an app to upload data, to support NightWatch, BBatS and our other monitoring projects.

# Strengthen



## Treasurer's report

Despite the continued economic uncertainty, which has impacted heavily on the charity sector as well as individuals, BCT has continued its vital work. The economic downturn has meant we ended the year with a decrease in funds, largely due to a loss on investments reflected at the time of our financial statements.

We saw a small deficit in unrestricted funds this year compared to a small surplus last year. Continuing with careful management of our finances, we did however see an increase in project expenditure as well as an increase in staff salary costs in the year 2022/23 with higher cost of living pressures. The difficulties in the global financial market mean we will continue our cautious approach to spending and continue to invest in diversifying our income streams.

For the year ended 31 March 2023, income was £1,689,685 (2022: £1,632,007) and expenditure was £1,773,272 (2022: £1,595,153), leading to net deficit for the year of £83,587 (2022: surplus £36,854). Taking into account losses on investments of £253,771 (2022: losses of £57,186), the net movement in funds for the year was a decrease of £337,358 (2022: a decrease of £20,332).

## Investment policy

Investments total £2,369,739 (2022: £2,580,593) at 31 March 2023. The aim of these funds is to provide a steady additional annual income stream to support our work, helping to reduce the risks associated with our reliance on project funding. Both this and the prior year were unpredictable in terms of investments and global stock markets were severely impacted by continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

For budgeting purposes, BCT assume a 6% total return per year to take into account market fluctuations. Investments are expected to meet our ethical criteria with returns reported on via a benchmark.

## Reserves policy

We adopt a risk-based approach for our reserves policy in order to define the amount we need to enable us to sustain our operations and protect us from unforeseen events. We have also been investing some of our reserves in strategic projects to secure BCT's long-term financial viability. At the end of the 2022/23 financial year our total reserves stand at £2,961,295 (2022: £3,298,653). Of this, £2,116,693 (2022: £2,359,197) are endowment funds and £226,146 (2022: £169,927) are restricted funds for projects. This leaves unrestricted funds of £618,456 (2022: £769,529) of which £259,986 (2022: £266,893) have been designated to key programmes of work in the next financial year (see notes to the financial statements for details). This leaves us with £358,470 (2022: £502,636) as unrestricted, unallocated funds. Of this, £275,452 (2022: £383,347) represents free reserves after deducting the net book value of fixed assets.

The trustees' policy is to work towards holding six months operating costs, approximately £500,000, in unrestricted reserves. We will continue to review our reserves policy and our progress towards achieving it each year. On behalf of BCT, I would like to thank all our members, donors and partners for their fantastic support and our volunteers and staff for their endless hard work on behalf of bat conservation.

Ruth Waters, Treasurer

## WHO'S WHO:

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Chris Packham CBE

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John Burton (until May 2022)  
Dr. Robert Stebbings

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David Gower OBE

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Aruhan Galieva

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Rupert Lancaster (resigned Sept 2022)

Colette Marshall (appointed Sept 2022)

Lord John Randall  
Dr. Orly Razgour  
Helen Slinger  
Matthew Terry

### Chief Executive

Kit Stoner

### Director of Conservation

Dr. Carol Williams (p/time)

### Director of Communications & Fundraising

Dr. Joe Nunez-Mino

## Summarised financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
<b>Income</b>					
Donations and legacies	381,410	49,221	-	<b>430,631</b>	440,935
Investment income	53,781	-	-	<b>53,781</b>	48,503
<i>Income from charitable activities</i>					
Conferences	69,451	-	-	<b>69,451</b>	29,289
Training courses and meetings	113,240	-	-	<b>113,240</b>	73,991
Projects and research	539,160	446,015	-	<b>985,175</b>	962,723
Other activities	28,205	9,202	-	<b>37,407</b>	76,566
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1,185,247</b>	<b>504,438</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,689,685</b>	1,632,007
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<i>Expenditure on raising funds</i>					
Membership support	77,370	-	-	<b>77,370</b>	66,778
Costs of raising funds	132,800	2,000	10,505	<b>145,305</b>	145,075
<i>Expenditure on charitable activities</i>					
Conferences	67,107	-	-	<b>67,107</b>	26,862
Training courses and meetings	90,161	-	-	<b>90,161</b>	68,640
Project and research costs	947,110	446,219	-	<b>1,393,329</b>	1,287,798
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1,314,548</b>	<b>448,219</b>	<b>10,505</b>	<b>1,773,272</b>	1,595,153
<b>Net (expenditure) / income before net losses on investments</b>	<b>(129,301)</b>	<b>56,219</b>	<b>(10,505)</b>	<b>(83,587)</b>	36,854
Net losses on investments	(21,772)	-	(231,999)	(253,771)	(57,186)
<b>Net (expenditure) / income for the year</b>	<b>(151,073)</b>	<b>56,219</b>	<b>(242,504)</b>	<b>(337,358)</b>	(20,332)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(151,073)</b>	<b>56,219</b>	<b>(242,504)</b>	<b>(337,358)</b>	(20,332)
Reconciliation of funds					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	769,529	169,927	2,359,197	3,298,653	3,318,985
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>618,456</b>	<b>226,146</b>	<b>2,116,693</b>	<b>2,961,295</b>	3,298,653

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above.



We spend 13p on fundraising per £1 raised

## Ethical funding



We are very aware of the need to raise our funds in an ethical way. We do not allow our personal, political or moral beliefs to influence decisions on donations, gifts or sponsorship, but we review them in the context of any potential harm to bat conservation or to BCT. The best interests of bats will always lie at the core of the decision making process. Our investments are all held in ethical funds.

# Thank you

We would like to thank all our members and friends who have made donations during the past year. We do not have the space to name everyone; however, we would like to thank everyone for their greatly valued support without which none of our work would be possible.

## Partner bat groups

Avon Bat Group  
Ayrshire and Arran Bat Group  
Bedfordshire Bat Group  
Berkshire & South Bucks Bat Group  
Birmingham & Black Country Bat Group  
Cambridgeshire Bat Group  
Cardiff Bat Group  
Central Scotland Bat Group  
Cheshire Bat Group  
Cleveland Bat Group  
Clwyd Bat Group  
Clyde Bat Group  
Cornwall Bat Group  
Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group  
Devon Bat Group  
Dorset Bat Group  
Dumfries & Galloway Bat Group  
Durham Bat Group  
East Lancashire Bat Group  
East Yorkshire Bat Group  
Essex Bat Group  
Fife & Kinross Bat Group  
Glamorgan Bat Group  
Gloucestershire Bat Group  
Guernsey Bat Group  
Gwynedd Bat Group  
Hampshire Bat Group  
Herefordshire Mammal Group  
Herts & Middlesex Bat Group  
Inverness Bat Group  
Isle of Wight Bat Group  
Isles of Scilly Bat Group  
Jersey Bat Group  
Kent Bat Group

Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group  
Lincolnshire Bat Group  
Loch Lomond Bat Group  
London Bat Group  
Lothians Bat Group  
Manx Bat Group  
Merseyside & West Lancashire Bat Group  
Montgomeryshire Bat Group  
Nene Valley Bats  
Norfolk and Norwich Study Group  
North Bucks Bat Group  
North Ceredigion Bat Group  
North East Scotland Bat Group  
North Lancashire Bat Group  
North Wales Mammal Group  
Northern Ireland Bat Group  
Northumberland Bat Group  
Nottinghamshire Bat Group  
Oxfordshire Bat Group  
Pembrokeshire Bat Group  
Shropshire Bat Group  
Skye and Lochalsh Bat Group  
Somerset Bat Group  
South Cumbria Bat Group  
South Lancashire Bat Group  
South Yorkshire Bat Group  
Staffordshire Bat Group  
Surrey Bat Group  
Sussex Bat Group  
Tayside Bat Group  
Vale of Glamorgan & Bridgend Bat Group  
Valleys Bat Group  
Warwickshire Bat Group  
West Yorkshire Bat Group  
Worcestershire Bat Group

## Charitable trusts, statutory bodies and other organisations

Animal and Plant Health Agency  
Animal Friends Insurance  
Betty Phillips Charitable Trust  
Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust  
Chapman Charitable Trust  
Ernest Kleinwort

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation  
Forest Research  
Forestry England  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
Green Mountain Trust  
Idris and Margaret Jones Charitable Trust  
Jack Patston Charitable Trust  
Michael Cornish Charitable Trust  
Natural England  
Pilkington General Charity Fund  
Pillar Charitable Trust  
The David Webster Charitable Trust  
The Marsh Charitable Trust  
The National Lottery Heritage Fund  
The Rose Animal Welfare Trust CIO

## Sponsorships (of £100 or more)

Animal Friends  
Echoes Ecology  
Highland Titles  
Lotek  
NHBS  
Pettersson  
Titley Scientific  
Vistry  
Wildcare  
Wildlife Acoustics, Inc.

## Corporate members (as of 1st April 2023)

Arbtech Consulting  
Asw Ecology  
Batability Courses & Tuition  
Batbox  
Big Domain  
Campsites.co.uk  
Canine Cottages  
Cleankill Environmental Services  
Continental Landscapes  
Dorset County Council  
Echoes Ecology

Ecological Survey and Assessment  
English Heritage  
Highland Titles  
Historic England  
Holidaycottages.co.uk  
Homegrown Timber Ltd  
I&G Ecological Consultancy  
Ingencia  
Kate's Clothing  
Killgerm Chemicals  
Marquis & Lord  
Original Cottages  
Stay in Cornwall  
Stay in Devon  
Tamworth Property Services  
The Nestbox Company  
Titley Scientific  
Treework  
United Environmental Services  
Viking Optical  
Vivara Pro  
Whitcher Wildlife  
Wilby Tree Surgeons  
Wildcare  
Wildlife Acoustics  
Wold Ecology

## Donations from bat groups (of £100 or more in the year to 31 March 2023)

Devon Bat Group  
Hampshire Bat Group  
Hertfordshire & Middlesex Bat Group  
Kent Bat Group  
Manx Bat Group  
North Ceredigion Bat Group  
•Oxfordshire Bat Group  
South Lancashire Bat Group  
Surrey Bat Group  
Warwickshire Bat Group

## Legacies

Elizabeth Anne Wallace



Photographers: BCT would like to thank all the photographers who so kindly donated their photographs during the year.

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Auditor: Sayer Vincent LLP

Editor: Alex Morss

Designed by: Matthew Ward

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