

## JUSTIFICATION OF INFRA-RED NIGHT VISION MONITORING DURING BAT SURVEYS.

(For client use only)

We have now introduced infra-red night vision cameras to monitor bat activity during roost characterisation surveys. This has provided us the opportunity to confirm greater detail of emergence and re-entry points as the surveys develop. This improved certainty of results offers the confidence that they are accurate when informing licence applications to cover potentially disturbing works. We can also advise mitigation measures that can be honed to better suit the circumstances of a roost and thereby improving their potential success.



These night vision cameras and IR lighting arrays complement our usual inventory of resources, namely experienced surveyors equipped with handheld sonogram detectors located at strategic points. Together with static sonogram recorders which enable later species identification using specialist software.

The recorded video often offers little more than a fluttering movement but this can be used to further focus the recordings as surveys progress to clearly identify the point of emergence or re-entry. The technology remains cost significant but is expected to become more affordable as techniques improve. However, for now the analysis of many hours of video searching for these incidents is a highly skilled, specialist exercise which does push fees. Hopefully in time, and with the advances in AI, new reliable software for identification will emerge.



This should be considered against the benefit of improved reliability of survey results. Bats are very much a protected species with strict legislation in place. Only coming across bats once work has started on a development without a suitable derogation licence in place can prove a very costly affair. Work can be delayed for a year whilst information is gathered and any evidence of negligence is likely to result in a very onerous prosecution.

## Protective Legislation

Bats and their roost sites are protected under UK and European legislation including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Habitats Directive. This legislation makes it an offence for any person to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats, where that disturbance may affect the ability of those bats to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young, or is likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of any bat species, whether in a roost or not.
- Damage or destroy a place of shelter (roost) of a bat, be that a resting or breeding place.
- Possess a bat, whole or in part, alive or dead.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost
- Sell or offer for sale or exchange whole or parts of bats, alive or dead.

There are Wildlife Units attached to most police forces across the country and prosecutions are frequent. Penalties are severe with high fines, potential imprisonment and more recently further compensation enforced under the Proceeds of Crime Act.



## Natural England

Natural England is the government body charged with looking after our countryside and wildlife. They look to the bats best interest. It is our role to persuade them that your development could go ahead without harm or unnecessary disturbance to the bats. This will require the best option for relocating a roost undertaken in the most carefully managed method. Once they are satisfied with our proposal they will licence the works which will have been conditioned as part of your Planning Approval by the LPA. The solution will be expected to be successful and long term.