

## Events, concerts and bats

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*Public events/concerts occurring near bat roosts may cause disturbance to these legally-protected species. Note for Property Managers, Countryside staff.*

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### Key points

- Bats are assumed to be present at all National Trust properties.
- They commonly roost in roof voids, in mature trees, and forage nightly in summer around woodland and lakes.
- Concerts, events and similar may cause unwitting disturbance to the bats either through noise or lights.
- Bats are protected by law from disturbance.

### 1. BACKGROUND

- National Trust properties are particularly rich in bats: some of the UK's rarest bats roost in our buildings and feed around the grounds, woodlands and lakes.
- A number of properties plan major events such as concerts and recitals each year, often ending with a firework display.
- If the event is set up close to roosting bats then the extra lights and noise could disturb the bats, and, at the very least, they may be delayed in emerging to feed at dusk, something that could greatly affect them when they have young.
- Fireworks at dusk will disturb bats foraging in the area.

### 2. POSITION

The National Trust realises that it has control of a significant number of important bat roosts and feeding areas nationally. It is committed to sound environmental policies and will protect bats and their roosting and feeding sites.

### 3. ACTIONS

#### 3.1 Concerts outdoors

Roost sites may be in buildings and trees.

Many bat species roost in roof voids and will emerge at dusk from small crevices under eaves or roof tiles, from mortar gaps high up on walls or out through barn doorways.

Bats are hard to locate in tree roosts, but older trees are more commonly used, especially those with rot holes, cracks and splits.

Where roosts are known ensure that

- concert/event activities are not close to or affecting the roosting area or exit place.
- lighting is not shone onto the exit holes
- loud music is not directed towards the roosting site.
- car parking: if specially lit, ensure that the lights are pointed downwards and away from walls and trees.
- performers: if the stage is lit, ensure the lights are directed away from walls with bat roosts. Ensure that loud-speakers are directed away from the roosting places and towards the audience. Ensure that any canopy or cover for the performers is not obstructing a bat roost exit. Ensure that very loud music (such as at rock and pop concerts) is not too close to any building or tree with a bat roost.

- firework displays have become popular at the end of an event/concert and usually occur at dusk, just when bats emerge. The noise and flashing lights can cause major disruption to bats and other wildlife. The disturbance for bats would be less if the firework display has finished by dusk, before they emerge to feed. One suggestion that is beginning to show favour is, since everyone has a firework display, be different and advertise the fact that the money saved in not having fireworks will be given to a good cause: the prime reason the public come is for the concert.

3.2 Concerts indoors, such as churches, converted barns, castles with bat roosts.

Bats, roosting high up in the ceiling of the recital room, can cope with some general noise and low-level lighting on a regular basis – they are found for example in churches that have regular services. The occasional concert is not likely to cause too much extra disturbance but some basic rules should be adhered to.

3.2.1. Lighting should be directed downwards and not towards the ceiling where the bats often roost.

3.2.2. Expect bats to awake and begin to fly around prior to emerging to feed at dusk. The public may see them so should be made aware of them, and told not to interfere with them. The exit point (which could be a ground level door, window or similar) should not be obstructed at any time. If the concert has finished by dusk then less possible disturbance will result.

3.2.3. Noise will disturb bats so excessively loud sounds should not be allowed when bats are roosting nearby – greatly amplified music, explosions of indoor fireworks and similar.

## **Further information**

Nature Conservation Newsletter, Feb 2002, Vol 2, No 2. “Is it time to face the music”  
Guidance Notes “Bats and the law”, “Feeding areas for bats”, “Bats and buildings”.

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## **Conservation Directorate Guidance Note Information**

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