

## Bats and blunder traps

*For Conservators, House Managers and Building Managers using such traps so as to prevent catching of bats (legally protected species)*

### Key points

- Use a style of trap that is fully enclosed and bats cannot enter (entry gaps of less than 15mm)
- Do not set traps in bat roosts such as a roof space (unless under licence) or adjacent to a roost

### 1. BACKGROUND

- A large proportion of the buildings managed by the National Trust house bats. Usually they roost away from the areas primarily used by humans such as in roof spaces, cellars, out-houses and barns. Bats occasionally enter all parts of buildings either having gained access by accident or because they are seeking new roosting places.
- Blunder traps are commonly used by Conservators and others to monitor insects in buildings. This is an essential part of their work when it comes to understanding damage to objects. The ones used by the NT have been a folded card, triangular in shape, with a sticky band inside that traps the insects. In some cases a smell or species-specific pheromone is added to increase the traps effectiveness.
- Larger-bodied insects that are trapped may flutter as they try to escape. This sound may attract a bat and there have been several reported cases of bats being caught and perishing by getting stuck inside the trap.
- All bats are protected by law and the National Trust has a positive policy towards wildlife in and around its properties. The risk of incidental capture of bats and other non-target species has to be minimised.

### 2. POSITION

The National Trust looks after the buildings and their interiors for the benefit of the nation. The Trust is also committed to looking after the wildlife associated with the buildings, some of which, such as some bat species, are nationally rare.

#### National Trust Act 1907

The National Trust was established in 1895 for the “permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation of lands and tenements (including buildings) of beauty or scientific interest and as regards lands for the preservation... of their natural aspect features and animal and plant life”.

### 3. ACTIONS

- a) Design  
Discussions with the insect expert who provides advice to National Trust conservators has led to the introduction of a different design of trap which is more enclosed so making it impossible for bats to become trapped. These are slim, oblong plastic cases enclosing the sticky area. These designs should replace the original type which allowed bats to enter through the large, open sides. Unfortunately this design does not trap clothes moths effectively so a modified version of the original trap may be necessary in such cases.
- b) Modified traps  
Any large stocks of the original card design could still be used up by wrapping a strip of sticky tape around the ends to restrict the size of the opening. Future supplies will include such a strip with instructions as to its use.
- c) Location  
Use of the original style of trap in known bat roosts (such as roof spaces), even if modified, would not be recommended. To set them out in a roof space used by bats may disturb them (and catching one definitely would!) so may be deemed an offence (see Bats and the Law). Generally blunder traps should not be set in bat roosting sites, rooms adjacent to a bat roost (unless very well sealed) and in areas where bats regularly enter.

### **Further information**

Guidance notes on Bats and the Law, and Bats Indoors.

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### **Conservation Directorate Guidance Note Information**

**Author:** Phil Richardson, Bat Conservation Officer

**Contact:** Conservation Directorate, 33 Sheep Street, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1RQ,  
**Tel:** 01285 651818. [Phil.Richardson@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:Phil.Richardson@nationaltrust.org.uk)

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