



Environmental Consultants

Bat Survey Report
Church Street Loughrea,
Co. Galway.



DOCUMENT DETAILS

Client: Galway County Council.

Project Title: For the demolition and refurbishment of a derelict structure on Church Street, Loughrea. Works include timber sliding doors which open to allow access to the elongated site to the rear and accommodate informal traders beneath the roof on market days. Power and water supply would be included for the traders. An outdoor seating area, which has a glass roof covering, will encourage spill-out from the auditorium lobby and be invitingly illuminated.

Document Title: Bat Survey Report

Prepared By: John Curtin; Eire Ecology

Date: 28/08/2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document reports on the findings of a bat survey conducted in July 2026 within the town of Loughrea, Co. Galway. Surveys were commissioned by Galway County Council's Regeneration Team to examine potential impacts on bats by proposed upgrade works to the Church Street building.

Surveys included a preliminary roost assessment of the structures and an emergence survey using bat detectors and thermal cameras. The aim was to determine whether bats currently use the existing building or rear wall as roosts.

Our survey shows no evidence of roosting bats within the building or the wall to the rear of the building. The proposed works will have no impact on the local bat population.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report details the findings of bat surveys carried out as an addition to works on the adjacent Loughrea Town Hall. Galway County Council have purchased an adjoining derelict dwelling on Church Street and proposed to create an open market space to the rear, create a roofed area designated to accommodate traders and other public events.

This report aims to;

- Examine the area of works for the presence of bats or their roosts.
- Identify species of bats using the sites and identify regions of higher bat activity to focus conservation efforts on.
- Potential impacts of bats by the proposed development.

The surveys undertaken are in line with recommendations of the Bat Conservation Trust 'Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edition, (Collins, 2023) and The Irish Wildlife Manual No. 134' (Marnell, 2022). The survey was designed and carried out by John Curtin B.Sc. (Env.) with the aid of field worker, Rowan Curtin. John has over fifteen years' experience of carrying out bat surveys. John has also completed the Bat Conservation Ireland, Bat Detector Workshop and Bat Handling Workshop which are the standard training for the carrying out of bat surveys in Ireland. He follows the Bat Conservation Ireland 'Good Practice Guidelines'(Aughney et al., 2008)'. In addition, John is a member of Bat Conservation Ireland, which monitor bat populations in Ireland, and facilitate the education of bat communities to the public.

No evidence of roosting bats was found with very low overall activity found. Surveys reveal the presence of a single bat species overflying the site; Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*).



Figure 1-1: 3d model of proposed building works

2 DESKTOP STUDY

2.1 BATS IN IRELAND – LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION

There are two main pieces of legislation which cover wildlife protection in Ireland – the Wildlife Act and the Habitats Regulations. These are outlined below, with particular reference to the protection afforded to bat species in Ireland.

The Wildlife Acts 1976–2012 (as amended).

The primary pieces of national legislation for the protection of wildlife in Ireland are the Wildlife Act (1976) and the Wildlife [Amendment] Act (2000). All species of bats in Ireland are listed on Schedule 5 of the 1976 Act, and are therefore subject to the provisions of Section 23, which make it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a bat
- Wilfully interfere with any structure or place used for breeding or resting by a bat
- Wilfully interfere with a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose

The *Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)* is the legislative instruments which are transposed into Irish law, inter alia, by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011–2021 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011 and later amendments) ('the 2011' Regulations), as amended.

All bats are listed in Annex IV to the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC) and the Lesser Horseshoe bat is further listed under Annex II to the same Directive. Article 12 of the Directive requires Member States to establish a system of strict protection for animal species listed in Annex IV. Article 16 provides for derogation from the protection under Article 12 in certain circumstances. Articles 12 and 16 are transposed into Irish law by Regulations 51 and 54, respectively, of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended). These makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Disturb bats, especially during critical life stages such as hibernation, maternity, and migration.
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places (roosts).
- Possess or trade bats, alive or dead, without licence

Provision is made in the Regulations for the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to grant, in strictly specified circumstances set out in that Regulation, a derogation license permitting any of the above activities "where there is no satisfactory alternative and the derogation is not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species to which the Habitats Directive relates at a favourable conservation status in their natural range".

The *Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)*: this Act integrates biodiversity considerations into the planning process and requires ecological assessments, including for bats, as part of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).

2.2 SITE LOCATION

The site lies within the town of Loughrea [53.197617, -8.567740]. There are no SAC's within 6km of the site which have been designated to Lesser Horseshoe Bats, the only Irish bat species designated under Annex II.

2.3 BAT SPECIES RECORDED IN THE SURROUNDING AREA

The BCI database was consulted for details on bat records held for the site and the surroundings. The database was consulted on the 12/08/2026 for details on historical records from the site for the surrounding area. Species recorded roosting within a 6km radius of the site include Whiskered, Natterers and Brown Long-eared.

Results are outlined in Table 2-1. This table refers to a roosts core sustenance zone (CSZ). A CSZ, as applied to bats, refers to the area surrounding a communal bat roost within which habitat availability and quality will have a significant influence on the resilience and conservation status of the colony using the roost.

Table 2-1: Irish bat species recorded in the BCI database

Species name	Distance of record from site	Last record	Details	Designation	Potential connectivity with subject site (for roost records)
Whiskered bat (<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>)	1.5km	2019	Derelict house. Droppings found in 2019		Outside the 1km CSZ for this species. Whiskered bats rely on woodland habitat. There is no suitable connectivity between the roost and the subject site.
Natterers bat (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>)	2.55km	2016	7 Natterers, 5 Brown Long-eared noted roosting in building. Soprano pipistrelle and Leisler's were noted flying on bat detector outside. It is unknown if these species were roosting or not	EU Habitats Directive Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts	Brown Long Eared and Natterers bats rely on woodland habitat for hunting. There is no suitable connectivity between the roost and the subject site. Soprano pipistrelles and Leisler's can hunt over towns however there is more suitable habitat surrounding the roost thus impacts are not expected.
Brown Long-eared (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)					
Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>)					
Leisler's (<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>)					

2.3.1 Bat Surveys Conducted in the Surrounding Area

Eire Ecology conducted a bat survey within the adjacent town hall in July 2021. During the dusk and dawn survey no bat was recorded at all. The surveyor concluded that the abundance of lights surrounding the structure and the lack of suitable dark zones or bat friendly landscape features (such as unlit treelines) lowers the potential of the site for these species.

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGIES

3.1.1 Habitats on site

The subject site is an urban habitat. The stone wall to the rear of the site has many openings which are suitable for bat roosts and the building has many access points which are suitable for bats. There is a lack of connective features, such as hedgerows or tree lines, from the site to suitable hunting grounds and the lighting on both sides of the road to the front and side of the site discourage bats from using the site as a roost.

Loughrea Church Street Site Outline



Figure 3-1: Location of site.

3.1.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

The proposed development will result in the demolition of the building to the front. The rear northern stone wall has a significant amount of crevices which will be filled in.

A daylight inspection of structures was undertaken to assess for potential to host a bat roost on the 24th of July 2026.

3.1.2.1 Structures.

The existing dwelling consists of a derelict dwelling with metal sheeting roof, plastered wall and boarded up windows. Access within was not permissible given the state of disrepair thus a nighttime emergence survey is required to be carried out from the front and rear. Along the front, streetlights can be found to either side, significantly decreasing the potential for bat access via this direction.

To the rear the building has sections of collapsed roof providing access but also allowing light ingress thus reducing the potential for the structure to act as a day roost. Much of the inside yard is used as a storage area for the town hall construction site. A section of stone wall to the rear was also assessed. Although some crevices can be found here, a search using a torch showed no evidence of bats or droppings.



Plate 3-1: Front of building



Plate 3-2: Rear wall



Plate 3-3: Rear of building

3.1.3 Night-time Surveys

A nighttime survey was conducted in Loughrea town on the 24th of July 2026. This survey consisted of multiple surveyors recording activity levels at the front and rear of the existing building. The purpose of survey was to examine for roosting bats that could be impacted by the development.

The bat detectors used during the surveys were Wildlife Acoustics Inc. (Massachusetts, USA) EM touch pro 2s which are triggered to record when a bat call is emitted louder than 18dB for 1sec. These detectors use full spectrum sampling; detecting all frequencies simultaneously, meaning that multiple bat calls can be recorded at the same time. In addition, three NVA's (Night Vision Aids) were used to aid spotting emerging bats;

- Canon XA10 with two IR Nightfox floodlights and two IR floodlights
- Pixfra ARC A613 thermal scope
- Guidetrack Pro TK612 thermal scope

3.1.3.1 Key findings from night time survey

3.1.3.1.1 Emergence surveys at Church Street building

Sunset fell at 21:34 with emergence surveys commencing 30 minutes previously. Temperature at the start of the survey was warm at 18 degrees, with no rain or wind. A slight drizzle occurred at 23:00 but not enough to impact activity. Bat detectors were positioned to the front and rear of the site

No bats emerged from the ruin with very low overall activity. The first recording occurred at 22:17 some 43 minutes after sunset when a brief distant Leisler's was recorded. This species typically emerges close to sunset indicating a distant roost.

Table 3-1: Combined bat registrations recorded.

Obs No.	Time	Species	Notes
1	22:17	Leisler's bat	Distant
2	22:30	Leisler's bat	Distant
3	22:30	Leisler's bat	Distant
4	22:55	Leisler's bat	Distant
5	23:10	Leisler's bat	Distant
6	23:21	Leisler's bat	Distant

Loughrea Church Street - Emergence Survey Details



Figure 3-2: Night Vision Locations

4 DISCUSSION

A single Irish bat species were found within the site; Leisler's Bat. No bat was found to emerge from the building.

Results mirror surveys previously conducted at the town hall building next door in July 2021 where no bats were recorded.

it is the surveyors opinion that the abundance of street lighting and the lack of suitable dark zones or bat friendly landscape features (such as unlit treelines) lowers the potential of the site for these species.

5 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Given the lack of evidence of bats no impacts are expected by the proposed development.

6 CONCLUSION

This report details the findings of a bat survey completed as part of a planned demolition and rejuvenation of a derelict site adjacent to the Loughrea town hall.

The results of the surveys presented above show no evidence of bats within the site. No impacts on the local bat population is expected by the proposed development.

7 APPENDIX



