



QUEENS MARKET BUILDINGS, RHYL

PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT, NESTING BIRD CHECK AND EMERGENCE SURVEYS

DATE	ECOLOGIST	APPROVED	VERSION	COMMENTS
25/11/2019	Peter Kneen	Rhian Hughes	V1	Original
07/09/2020	Peter Kneen	Keymar Wake	V2	Addition of communication with DCC and Inclusion of Bright Spot

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Report Ref EE.578.19.PK

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Executive Summary

Site	Queens Market, Rhyl, Denbighshire, LL18 1SE (SJ 00680 81535)
Surveyors	Peter Kneen, Keymar Wake
Proposed work	Demolition of a group of buildings with the aim to redevelop the site in future.
Building/structures affected	A collection of large buildings including three storey buildings with asbestos roofs used for accommodation and nightclub, single storey buildings with flat roofs and garages.
Type of survey	Preliminary Roost Survey (PRA) and nesting bird survey (31/07/2019). Nocturnal Emergence Surveys (01/08/2019 & 15/08/2019)
Results of survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the buildings are either flat roofed or covered in asbestos sheeting. • No evidence of bats was observed during the survey, however several of the buildings had limited or no access. • Evidence of nesting birds in a number of buildings. • No bats were recorded on either of the nocturnal emergence surveys.
Survey conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The buildings have low suitability for bats due to the asbestos roofing and the location adjacent to the coast as well as lack of vegetation and linear features in the surroundings. • The majority of the site was partially or totally inaccessible to investigate and therefore, after consultation with Denbighshire Council Ecologist it was decided that two nocturnal emergence surveys would be conducted to ascertain whether the buildings were used as bat roosts. • Two nocturnal emergence surveys were undertaken and no bats recorded within the area. It is considered that the buildings, due to their proximity to the sea and lack of vegetative connectivity to the wider landscape have low potential to support roosting bats. • The Bright Spot building was not included in the initial survey as, at the time, it was not within the scheme. After conducting the survey on the rest of the site with no evidence of bats and no observations of bats within the area during the dusk emergence surveys, it is considered that follow up surveys on the Bright Spot building are not necessary. This stance was discussed and agreed with the Denbighshire County Ecologist.
RAMs and Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the large numbers of nesting birds observed during the PRA, the works should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (April-September inclusive). Should demolition works during the nesting season be unavoidable, a nesting bird check would be needed. However

	<p>given the size and complexity of the site, a nesting bird check may not be conclusive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swifts were observed emerging from the small garages in the centre of the site during the PRA and therefore nine swift boxes should be included within the design of the redevelopment (as detailed in section 7 of this report).• 4500m² of wild flower habitat to be created in the Rhyl are (as detailed in section 7 of this report).• 50 standard trees including native fruiting/flowering species to be planted within the Rhyl area (Details in section 7).• The landscape architects working on the scheme are aiming to incorporate increased biodiversity within the scheme.• Further details for the mitigation and enhancement recommendations can be found within section 7 of this report.
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Enfys Ecology Limited were commissioned by Denbighshire County Council to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) and nesting bird survey of the buildings surrounding Queens Market, Rhyl. The proposed work is to demolish the majority of the buildings and redevelop the site.
- 1.2 The survey was commissioned to determine whether the proposed works would affect protected species: specifically, bats and nesting birds. The surveys to inform this report were carried out on 31st July 2019 (PRA), 1st August 2019 (Nocturnal Emergence) and 15th August 2019 (Nocturnal Emergence). This report is valid for a period of two years from this date in accordance with best practice.
- 1.3 All British bats (and roost sites) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended). In addition, all bats are classified as European Protected species by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under this legislation, it is an offence to kill, injure, or disturb a bat, or to destroy any place used as a shelter by bats.

2.0 Site description

- 2.1 The survey area is comprised of several blocks of buildings. In the north west of the site there is a large three storey, rendered building with areas of slate cladding which has previously been used as an arcade, nightclub and living accommodation. There are many large windows to the north, overlooking the sea and the roof is made up of asbestos sheeting. In the north east of the site there is another large three storey, red brick, slate roofed building. This building has been used in the past for living accommodation on the upper floors and currently has a working arcade and nightclub on the ground floor. In the centre of the site is a metal roofed building which makes up some of the market area, this appears to be used for storage and is a single storey in height. Also in the centre of the site is a row of small garages, a three storey residential property and a small court yard. In the south of the site there is the main Queens Market building with original three storey, red bricked frontage.
- 2.2 The site is located in the north of Rhyl with an approximate central grid reference of SJ 00680 81535. The site is separated from the sea to the north by the main road. The immediate surroundings of the site are made up of residential and commercial properties with no vegetation or fresh water bodies present.
- 2.3 There is one statutory protected site within 1km of the site. This is approximately 600m to the north and is a Wild Bird General License Exclusion Zone (Natural England) which runs almost the entire width of North Wales and up the English Coast to Cumbria.

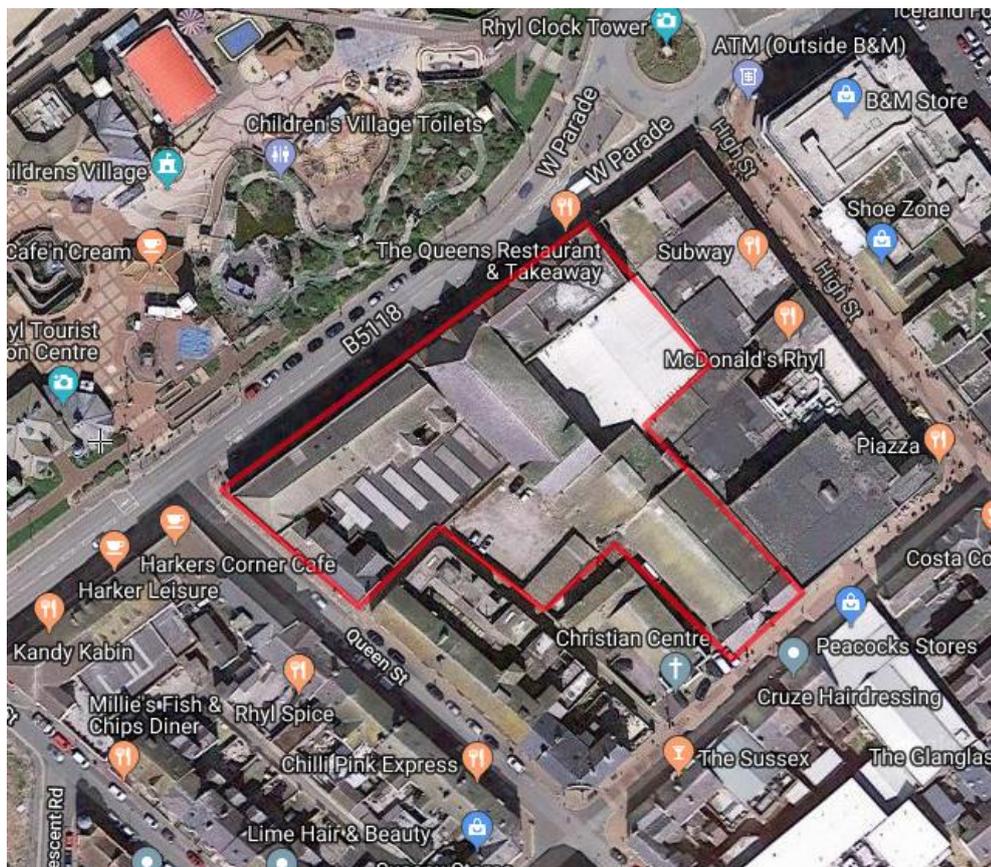


FIGURE 2.1 THE SURVEYED BUILDINGS ARE SHOWN OUTLINED IN RED.

IMAGE © GOOGLE 2019

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA)

The buildings were assessed for any signs of bats; these include droppings, feeding remains, and other indicative marks, plus features of potential use to bats such as crevices, cracks and other holes, and any potential access points into the building. High-powered torches were used to inspect any identified features, and an endoscope was used to investigate any gaps or crevices, where appropriate. Both the interior and exterior of the buildings were examined.

3.2 Dusk emergence and dawn re-entry surveys

Two dusk emergence surveys were carried out in August, which is within the peak bat survey months of May to August (inclusive).

During the dusk surveys the perimeter of the entire site was monitored by ten surveyors (nine surveyors on the second survey) placed around the site in order to observe the maximum area of the survey site possible. Records were taken of any bats observed emerging from the buildings, and of any other bat activity taking place in the area during the

survey. All surveyors used bat box duet detectors and Anabat SD2 frequency division and Anabat Express bat detectors were positioned around the buildings to record any bat calls for further analysis.

The dusk emergence surveys began approximately 30 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 90 minutes after sunset.

3.2 *Survey Details*

The building inspection was carried out on the 31st July 2019 by ecologist Peter Kneen and Keymar Wake (both accredited agents under licence number S086391-1. Building and potential roost assessments were carried out following the guidelines set by the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016). Photographic evidence was taken where necessary.

The nocturnal emergence surveys were undertaken on 1st August and 15th August and were led by Keymar Wake (accredited agent under licence number S086391-1 and were carried out following the guidelines set by the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016).

3.4 *Limitations*

- 3.4.1 Bats are a difficult group to survey, and as bats are highly mobile animals it is possible that they could move into a building after the survey has occurred. Therefore, it cannot be guaranteed that bats will not move into the building following the survey.
- 3.4.2 There was limited access to some parts of the site due to the nature and layout of the buildings. There was also no access to the roof space of the building in the north east of the site due to health and safety risks around asbestos. As a result, only the buildings where access was possible have been detailed in the internal inspection below.
- 3.4.1 The Bright Spot building was not originally assessed during the bat surveys, however after consultation with the Denbighshire Ecologist, it has now been incorporated within this report.

4.0 Building Description

TABLE 4.1 – INTERNAL

Building Feature	Description	Photos
Main Nightclub Building (NW of the site)		
<p>The roofs (where accessible)</p>	<p>The roof on this section of the site was made up of corrugated concrete/asbestos looking sheeting. No covering or render beneath with some light being seen between the sheets.</p> <p>The majority of the roof spaces which were accessible contained skylights on the north elevation, which illuminated the areas.</p> <p>There are a number of distinct roof loft spaces in the building and the majority of them are separated from each other with brick walls, however some of the walls are starting to fall down allowing spaces between lofts to form.</p> <p>The spaces appeared to be used occasionally for storage There was a good deal of cobweb cover.</p>	

Queens Market Buildings, Rhyl – Preliminary Roost Assessment

	<p>Evidence of birds' nests were present in some of the wooden features, however no droppings or other evidence of bats using the roof spaces was observed.</p>	
Rooms within the building	<p>The rooms within the main building are unoccupied and used to be a hotel/ nightclub. Large north facing windows illuminate the northern rooms and the southern rooms are illuminated by un-shuttered smaller windows.</p> <p>There are in excess of 20 rooms within the main building. Many of these are associated with the old nightclub, however some were living accommodation. In several rooms around the building, there were windows left open and evidence of birds entering the building was observed.</p> <p>No evidence of bats was observed in any of the rooms within the main hotel building.</p>	 A photograph showing the interior of a room, likely a bar or nightclub. The room has red walls and a black ceiling. A curved bar with a wooden top and black base is visible on the right. There are several purple upholstered chairs and a small table in the foreground. In the background, there are windows and a doorway leading to another room. The floor is covered with red carpeting and some debris.

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<p>Abandoned Arcade and storage rooms</p>	<p>On the ground floor of the main hotel building there is a large open space which was the old arcade. The only windows in the room are to the north which have been boarded to protect them from the street. As such the room is almost completely dark.</p> <p>To the south of the main open space there are several storage rooms which extend under the flat roofed section of the building to the back. These rooms were still full of the associated items for the arcade and the roof was leaking significantly.</p> <p>No evidence of bats was observed during the survey.</p>	 A photograph showing the interior of an abandoned arcade. The room has bright red walls and a curved bar counter in the foreground. In the background, there are several arcade machines, including one with a 'Parker's' sign. The ceiling is white with recessed lighting. The overall atmosphere is dark and somewhat eerie.
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Queens Market Storage Rooms (NE of the site)		
Storage rooms	<p>In the north east of the site there is a large open building with a comparatively modern structure. The space inside is large and open with steel framework spanning the ridged metal roof. The area is currently being utilised as storage for unused arcade equipment.</p> <p>No gaps in the panelling were observed, potentially due to the height of the roof, however there was evidence of birds roosting within the space so there are likely to be some entrance and egress points.</p> <p>There is no natural light in the building and it is generally kept in darkness.</p> <p>No evidence of bats roosting was observed.</p>	

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Queens Market		
Market Hall	<p>Within the main Queens Market, there was access above the suspended ceiling and so this is where the observations were taken from. Due to the lack of walkways and access, all observations were made from a platform.</p> <p>The concave ceiling had holes present in it where the supports for the suspended ceiling pass through the plaster to the joists above. There do not appear to be any holes allowing light from outside the building in to this space however, it is unclear what lies between the barrel shaped ceiling and the roof above. Light is present from the market below. N.B. The light on the ceiling in the photo opposite is from a torch used by a surveyor and not a permanent fixture.</p>	

Queens Market Buildings, Rhyl – Preliminary Roost Assessment

	<p>It was impossible to closely inspect the walls and ceiling due to the size of the building and lack of access, however no evidence of bats was observed in the accessible areas.</p>	
Garages		
Garages	<p>Within the centre of the site there is a row of six single storey garages. The doors of three of these were damaged to the point where they were stuck open allowing sunlight to enter.</p> <p>Within the garages themselves, swifts (<i>Apus apus</i>) were observed entering and emerging during the daytime survey as well as a nesting pigeon (<i>Columba livia</i>).</p> <p>No evidence of bats was observed during the survey.</p>	

Queens Market Buildings, Rhyl – Preliminary Roost Assessment

TABLE 4.2 - EXTERNAL

Building	Description	Photos
Main Nightclub	<p>In the north west of the site there is the main Nightclub building. This building is covered in a mixture of cladding and render which are both in a poor state of repair. The building is three stories high, not including the loft spaces. Windows are generally closed however some have been left open. The roof of this part of the building was pitched and made up of, what appeared to be, asbestos panels. (The first of the photos opposite shows the section of the building with a pitched roof, however the pitch is obscured by the walls which rise above the wall plates.)</p> <p>To the rear of the building was a two storey elevation with a flat roof.</p> <p>There are cracks in the render and gaps in the cladding which have potential to offer roosting opportunities to bats.</p>	

Queens Market Buildings, Rhyl – Preliminary Roost Assessment

<p>Flats above Queens Bowling Centre</p>	<p>The roof for this building is slated with several additional dormer style pitches. The roof slates appeared to generally be in a good state of repair however, access was not permitted within this building so closer inspection was not possible due to health and safety issues. The wood work above the dormer style sections is rotten with several holes in the façade.</p> <p>No evidence of bats was observed, however there are several features which could allow bats entry in to this building including open windows and holes in the wooden facades.</p>	
<p>Queens Market</p>	<p>The only view point of the external parts of the main Queens Market were from the west. From this location it could be seen that the roof over the top of the market was made up of, what appeared to be, asbestos sheeting. The walls were brick with several holes in them. Attached to this main building was a row of garages (see below) as well as a row of what appeared to be flats. No access was possible inside the flats.</p>	

Queens Market Buildings, Rhyl – Preliminary Roost Assessment

	<p>Holes in the walls were visible (circled in red) in the main market building which would allow access for birds as well as bats in to the roof space.</p>	
Garages	<p>In the centre of the site to the west, there is a row of six single storey, block built, flat roofed garages. The doors to three of these are broken to the point where the doors cannot close and sunlight is allowed in. The other doors also have gaps around the entrance which would allow bats a point of entrance and egress. There was evidence of birds nesting within these buildings.</p>	

5.0 Survey Results

PRA

- 5.1 During the internal inspection of the building, no evidence of bats was observed within any of the buildings. However, due to the limited access, state of repair and scale of the buildings, it was considered that the buildings as a whole had low potential to support roosting bats. Due to the size and complexity of the buildings on site, it was not possible to view all areas of buildings which could have supported potential roosting features. This, in combination with the fact that the majority of the buildings are interconnected and that the nature of the works is demolition and site clearance, it is considered appropriate to view the whole site as a single entity when informing nocturnal surveys.
- 5.2 After consultation with the Denbighshire County Council Ecologist, it was advised that the buildings where a full internal inspection was not possible, be treated as having high potential for roosting bats and therefore three nocturnal surveys conducted around the whole site. However, following two nocturnal emergence surveys at the peak of the survey season and recording no bats within the area, let alone emerging from the building, it was deemed acceptable to reduce the survey effort to two nocturnal surveys.

Nocturnal Emergence Surveys

- 5.3 Two nocturnal emergence surveys were undertaken during the summer season with surveyors on each being situated surrounding the site with good vantage points to observe the buildings. During these surveys no bats were recorded flying in the vicinity. It is therefore considered unlikely that bats are using any of the buildings as roosts or using the surrounding area for foraging.
- 5.4 The first of the nocturnal surveys was undertaken with nine surveyors on 01/08/2019 during suitable weather conditions with the starting temperature being 18°C at the start of the survey (20:42). The cloud cover was 0%, dry with no wind. No bats were observed or recorded.
- 5.5 The second of the nocturnal surveys was undertaken with eight surveyors on 15/08/2019 during suitable weather conditions with the starting temperature being 17°C at the start of the survey (20:20). The cloud cover was 30%, dry with no wind. No bats were observed or recorded.

Nesting Birds

- 5.6 During the initial survey, swifts were observed nesting within the small row of garages in the centre of the site. In addition, evidence of birds nests were found within the main building, within the market place itself and also within the storage building in the north east of the

site. Pigeons and various gulls were also observed around, although at the time of survey no nests were observed on the external parts of any of the buildings.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposed works involve the complete demolition of the building.
- 6.2 The internal inspection of the building revealed no evidence of roosting bats. The buildings on site are generally in a poor state of repair and would give different bat species opportunity for various types of roost. However, due to the site's proximity to the sea, its exposure to high winds and the lack of suitable vegetation for foraging in the surrounding area, it is not considered to be suitable for bats. The two nocturnal emergence surveys were undertaken at the height of the bat survey season and, if there had been activity in the area, it would have been detected and recorded. The Bright Spot building was not included within the initial survey and was not inspected for bat potential; however, as it is located within the site the building was therefore subject to the nocturnal surveys where surveyors were located all around the block of buildings. It can therefore be concluded that the Bright Spot building shares the results of the other buildings on site.
- 6.3 As no bats have been found to be using the site for roosting or foraging, it is considered that the demolition and redevelopment of the site will have no impact on bat conservation nor on individual bats. Due to the location of the site and the lack of connectivity with the wider green landscape, it is considered that onsite mitigation for bats is not appropriate, however, if upon finalisation of the plans, corridors of tree planting are incorporated, then bat boxes should be incorporated into the design. Instead, offsite enhancement for bats should be included within the scheme as detailed below.
- 6.4 During the initial survey, swifts were observed nesting within the small garages in the centre of the site. These garages will be lost as part of the demolition and their loss should be mitigated onsite with provision of nine (three sets of three) inbuilt swift boxes incorporated within the final project, an example of this is the Manthrope swift brick. The exact location for these should be decided once a final design is fixed.
- 6.5 At the time of the survey nesting pigeons were observed within the buildings on site. As all birds are afforded legal protection during nesting, it will be necessary to undertake demolition works outside the nesting bird season or, should works at this time be unavoidable, a nesting bird check should be undertaken to check for nesting birds. If birds are found to be nesting they would need to be left until fledged.

7.0 Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs), Mitigation and Enhancement

- 7.1 As there is limited scope for mitigation and enhancement onsite for bats, due to lack of suitable habitat, 12 Kent style bat boxes should be erected in suitable locations around Rhyl to enhance the local area for bats. It is suggested this be done through community projects so as to increase public awareness of biodiversity as well as showing additional positive impacts of the redevelopment to Rhyl. The exact locations of these boxes should be decided under consultation between the County Ecologist and Denbighshire Countryside Services. These should be a combination of different style of boxes, including Kent bat boxes (bat ladders) and large colony boxes.
- 7.2 Within the site nine swift boxes should be erected in the final design to mitigate for the loss of the garages where swifts currently roost. These should be erected in line with guidance including:
- Optimum places are under deep eaves, on gables and on high walls in some shade
 - Not subject to disturbance from window cleaning or maintenance visits
 - Safe from potential attack by Squirrels, Crows and Magpies i.e. no adjacent perches or creepers
 - At least 4.5 metres above ground level
 - With uncluttered adjacent airspace for easy flight access
- 7.3 The demolition works should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (March-September inclusive). Should demolition works during the nesting season be unavoidable, a nesting bird check would be needed. However given the size and complexity of the site, a nesting bird check may not be conclusive. It is an offence to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built with unlimited fines and/or imprisonment.
- 7.4 In addition to the provision of roosting opportunities in the surrounding areas, it is also necessary to provide enhancement of local biodiversity and feeding opportunities for all wild native species. The landscape architects associated with the scheme are working to include biodiversity gains within the planting scheme onsite, and enhance biodiversity as much as possible. However, due to the limited available space within the site, 4500m² of wild flower (Boston seeds - BSRE 100%: Restore & Enrich Wildflower Seeds) linear habitat is to be created off site, within Rhyl. 50 standard trees will also be planted alongside this wild flower habitat, to form a barrier from otherwise managed grassland without shading it. The tree species will be made up of smaller native flowering species including bird cherry (*Prunus sp.*), crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*), apple (*Malus domestica*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), and goat willow (*Salix caprea*).

- 7.5 The trees should be surrounded by mulch and protected (using something similar to chestnut pale fencing) to allow them to establish properly and staked. The trees should be bare root and 1.8 – 2m, tree planting should take place between November – February.
- 7.6 The areas allocated for wildflower planting should be power harrowed, seeded and then rolled and spring or autumn. The management of these areas must be undertaken in line with best practice and it is therefore recommended that this work is given to specific contractors/ DCS.
- 7.7 The enhancements could take place at any suitable site within the Rhyl area however it is suggested that a suitable place would be in the park at Maes Y Gog (Maes Gwilyn) located 2.2km east of the development site. Figure 7 below shows an approximate 5m width of planting on the north and south of the park. To the west the width would increase to approx. 30m away from areas more utilised by the public. This area would have a trimmed path where the public footpath bisects the meadow. The south western section of the park would also be seeded with wildflowers. Planted areas should be marked out with signs, similar to that shown in figure 7.2, so they are not mowed at the same time as the remaining grassland.
- 7.8 The wildflower planting will be beneficial to a large number of species including bats and birds. The tree planting, as shown in the diagram below, will connect linear features in the landscape without creating barriers to the enjoyment of the area by residents.



FIGURE 7.1 – WILD FLOWER PLANTING SHOWN IN GREEN, TREE PLANTING IN RED
IMAGE © GOOGLE 2019



**FIGURE 7.2 – DO NOT CUT SIGN USED ON NORTH WALES WILDLIFE TRUST MANAGED WILDFLOWER MEADOW.
IMAGE © GOOGLE 2019**

8.0 Legislation

8.1 Bats

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) forms the key legislation protecting habitats and species in the UK. All UK bat species are fully protected under the 1981 Act through inclusion on Schedule 5. All bats are also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) which transcribes the EC Habitats Directive into UK law. In combination, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately or recklessly take, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a place or structure used by bats for shelter or protection;
- Deliberately or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost; or
- Deliberately or recklessly disturb bats while occupying a roost.

Bat roosts are protected under these laws whether the animals are present at the time of survey or not. Under both laws the Welsh Government and D.E.F.R.A. are empowered to issue licences to carry out work to bat roosts for reasons of overriding public interest. It is not illegal to tend to a disabled bat pending recovery.

In addition, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act all birds, their nests and eggs are protected during the breeding season (typically March to August inclusive) from killing/destruction, damage and disturbance.

8.2 *Birds*

In addition, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act all birds, their nests and eggs are protected during the breeding season (typically March to August inclusive) from killing/destruction, damage and disturbance.

9.0 References and Useful Information Sources

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-13 978-1-872745-96-1