

Application for bat licences from NPWS, March 2025

David Clarke

Summary

I have several years' professional experience working as a bat ecologist. I have designed and managed research projects and landscape level surveys that have focused specifically on conserving threatened bat species in New Zealand. I joined the Bat Conservation Ireland team in May 2023 and since then I have been coordinating two of the Irish Bat Monitoring Programmes, the All-Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterways Monitoring Scheme and the newly established Woodland Bat Monitoring Scheme.

Qualifications

- PhD in Environmental Science, University of Galway, 2015
- BSc in Environmental Science, University of Galway, 2009, First Class Honors

Relevant Professional Experience

Ecologist and lecturer at EcoQuest Education Foundation, Kaiaua, Waikato, New Zealand, September 2016 – March 2023

- Principal researcher on the Hunua Ranges Long-tailed Bat Monitoring Programme. I set up this programme in 2017 to better understand the distribution of the threatened long-tailed bat (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*) in the region. This involved conducting biannual bioacoustic surveys to monitor the presence and distribution of the species across the Hunua Ranges, one of the largest tracts of native forest in the Auckland Region of New Zealand. I expanded the work to include a bat banding and radio-tracking programme to learn more about their population dynamics and to locate and protect bat roosts within the forest. For this I recruited and coordinated a large team of volunteers consisting of students, regional council staff, staff from various environmental consultancies and members of the general public to assist me with the fieldwork for each bat catching season. In addition to managing and directing all field and academic operations I was responsible for writing all technical reports

related to the work. I was also solely responsible for all communications with external funding authorities, local and regional authorities, the scientific community, the media and the general public in relation to the work.

- Manager and coordinator of the Finding Franklin Bats Project, a collaborative community focused initiative involving a community group (Predator Free Franklin), Auckland Council, and EcoQuest Education Foundation, and Māori iwi. I helped to set up this region-wide strategy in 2021 to comprehensively survey bats in the Franklin Region of New Zealand's North Island, a fragmented landscape with a blend of agricultural, urban and remnant native forest habitat. The initiative involved working closely with landowners and community members to achieve broad scale acoustic survey coverage of the area. I also set up and managed an online database of the results of the surveys which included detailed spreadsheets, GIS maps of the project areas and survey results as well as any arising reports from the work, which I shared access to with community members and stakeholders. Additionally, I ran a series of educational and practical workshops for both students and the general public that involved delivering presentations, conducting community bat walks and organising and running training workshops in bat survey techniques. These workshops covered bioacoustic survey methods, spectrogram processing, data interpretation and analysis, bat catching strategies using harp traps, and radio-tracking training exercises.

- Served as a scientific adviser for the Auckland Bat Alliance, a group of experts that came together to seek a halt in the decline of bats in the Auckland Region. This role involved regularly meeting with fellow researchers, community leaders, regional council authorities and ecological consultants to explore avenues of research and to implement region-wide conservation strategies to help protect the species. I regularly provided updates for the group on progress made with my own work, as well as submitting survey results to the National Bat Database which is managed by the Department of Conservation. Major achievements of the group included the establishment of a more integrated network of data sharing and collaboration between different groups working with bats across New Zealand, as well as the publication of the first threat classification assessment document on native bat species for the

Auckland Region.

- Since joining Bat Conservation Ireland in May 2023, I have received comprehensive training in the surveying of Irish bat species. This has included bat handling, roost visits, bat box checks, harp trapping and mist netting.
- In 2024 I ran two courses on bat roost identification in trees for the OPW on behalf of Bat Conservation Ireland. These took place on the 24th and 30th October 2024.
- In 2025 I plan to run a couple of courses on bat handling and bat survey techniques on behalf of Bat Conservation Ireland.

Other relevant experience/qualifications

- I spent two summer seasons (2021 and 2022) as a volunteer on the Eglinton Bat Project, Fiordland, New Zealand. This is the longest running mark-recapture programme running in New Zealand (over 25 years) and provides invaluable trend data on the populations of both species of endemic bats in the region. This work involved harp trapping, radio-tracking bats in a forested landscape, harp trapping at tree roosts, and handling bats and recording biometric data. I have attached records of my handling experience from this experience, which gives details of key competencies that I completed successfully during this time.
- I received a certificate in the use of acoustic lures for bat surveys in March 2019 (certificate attached).

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me via any of the contact information listed below.

Kind regards

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