

## **Report to append application to renew Derogation Licence No. DER/BAT 2024-56**

### **Summary of work in 2024**

This licence, along with two other licences (Licence No. C32/2024: Licence to capture protected wild animals for educational, scientific or other purposes, and Licence No. 024/2024: Licence to photograph/film wild animals) was granted to me as part of my education and monitoring work on behalf of Bat Conservation Ireland in 2024.

All licences were applied for so that BC Ireland could undertake a couple of bat training workshops in conjunction with different bat groups and local authorities in Ireland for educational purposes. These workshops included demonstrations on bat survey techniques and in particular, the use of harp traps for capturing bats. The purpose of these exercises was to demonstrate bat handling techniques to the attendees as well as serving as a ground-truthing exercises to investigate the existence of woodland bat species at certain locations in advance of the new All-Ireland Woodland Bat Monitoring Scheme taking place in 2024.

Two of these events took place in 2024. The first was at Donadea Woodland, Co. Kildare on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024. The second event took place at Clara Vale, Co. Wicklow on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

In order to adhere to Article 12 of the Habitats Directive concerning disturbance of animals, every care was taken to ensure that disturbances to any bats encountered were kept to a minimum. This included careful planning to ensure that the trapping events did not take place during the bat's hibernation period, or their main nursery period when adult bats were still caring for their young. Additionally, other potential disturbances such as excessive lighting and noise were kept to minimum during the events. To help ensure this, group sizes were limited to only cater for a small number of participants (less than ten people in both cases). Attendees were asked to keep noise levels to a minimum, and where applicable were asked to use low light settings (preferably red light) on torches/headtorches where at all possible.

At the Donadea event five bats were captured in total, with three captured on the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> and two captured on the 25<sup>th</sup> April. All bats were identified as soprano pipistrelles. All specimens were only handled by me and were released unharmed. Trapping using harp traps also took place at Clara Vale in Co. Wicklow on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Similarly, all precautions were taken to minimise disturbance to bats present in the woodland, including keeping noise to a minimum as using appropriate low-level lighting. However, on this occasion no bats were captured at all.

## **Proposed work related to these licences in 2025**

BCIreland are planning a number of events in 2025 that will require the use of these licences. These include up to three workshops to be conducted in August/September for the training of individuals on bat survey techniques. We also plan, time permitting, to do at least one ground truthing exercise in one of the woodland sites that are part of the newly established All-Ireland Woodland Bat Monitoring Scheme.

## **Addressing of points in section 11 of the ‘Application for Derogation Licence’ document**

11.1. The derogation licence is being sought as it is the only available option in that during our proposed workshops and ground truthing events we will be examining live bats for educational and scientific purposes. No alternative is possible in order to examine the morphological characteristics of bats for ID purposes, and for teaching these relevant skills to potential bat workers.

11.2. The actions permitted by a derogation licence will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the bat species involved. This is because these activities will be coordinated by a competent individual with ample experience in surveying and handling bats, and nothing will be done to place the bats or their roosts at risk. As in 2024, any activities scheduled will be done so outside of the potential hibernation period for Irish bats (November-March) and as per Article 12, will avoid periods of the rearing of young bats.

11.3. The main mitigation measures planned for any of the potential species that will be encountered are:

- Keeping noise levels to a minimum
- Keeping artificial light levels to a minimum (where possible, to only use red light sources) and to avoid direct illumination of bat roosts, if encountered. For more guidelines on lights and bats, see [https://www.batconservationireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BCIrelandGuidelines\\_Lighting.pdf](https://www.batconservationireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BCIrelandGuidelines_Lighting.pdf)
- Bats to be handled/processed as efficiently and quickly as possible to minimise any potential disturbance to them.

11.4. Please see the other documents attached with my original application. These outline my relevant experience and competencies, as well as the letter of support from Bat Conservation Ireland Senior Projects Manager Dr. Niamh Roche.

**Bat Conservation Ireland Ltd.,**

**Registered Address:  
Carmichael Centre, 4-7, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.**



[www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org)   [davidc@batconservationireland.org](mailto:davidc@batconservationireland.org)

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Yours sincerely,

David Clarke

Dr. David Clarke  
Bat Conservation Ireland  
Postal/Registered Address: Carmichael House, 4-7, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7, D07 RHA8.  
E-mail: [davidc@batconservationireland.org](mailto:davidc@batconservationireland.org)  
Website: [www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org)  
Social Media: [Bat Conservation Ireland - Home](#) | [Facebook](#) | <https://twitter.com/BatConservIre>