

M-B2 Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. Current status

- 1.1 The greater horseshoe was originally a cave roosting bat, and although a few underground breeding sites exist in the UK the majority now use old buildings for maternity purposes, particularly targeting old large houses, stable blocks and other outbuildings. Females forage over a radius of 4 km from the roost in woodlands, along hedgerows feeding on moths; large beetles associated with grazing pasture are important element of their diet.
- 1.2 During this century the greater horseshoe bat has declined significantly throughout northern Europe. In the UK, this species is restricted to South West England and South Wales, although vagrants may be recorded elsewhere.
- 1.3 This species is at the extreme north-east edge of its UK range in Monmouth. The single known roost is vital to any possible expansion of range. The roost is therefore important in UK terms for achieving expansion.
- 1.4 Monmouthshire has only one known maternity roost. This is subject to detailed monitoring annually. At present this is a maternity group of about 120 producing approximately 60 juveniles. Adult numbers have doubled over the past ten years; this is in line with the rest of the UK population, which is at present estimated at 6000-7000 (JNCC).

No substantial hibernation sites are known in the county, this group having its main known hibernation sites in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. A few hibernation sites are recorded which hold only one or two individuals.

There is some evidence that a second group exists near Chepstow. Some individuals have been recorded foraging just west and north-west of the town, which helps to support this theory.

- 1.5 This bat is listed on Appendix II of the Bonn Convention (and is included in the Convention's Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe), Appendix II of the Bern Convention (and Recommendation 36 on the Conservation of Underground Habitats) and Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive. It is protected under Schedule 2 (Regulation 38) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations, 1994 and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. The bat is also recognised on the

NERC Section 42 list which identifies species of principal importance in Wales.

2. Current factors affecting the species (In rank order of importance)

- 2.1 Habitat degradation and decline in available prey species due to inappropriate grazing and livestock type.
- 2.2 Habitat losses or degradation due to restoration works on old buildings and walls.

3. Current action

- 3.1 The roost has been listed as a SSSI and is part of the Wye Valley Bat Sites SAC.
- 3.2 Ongoing annual monitoring of the roost and productivity is taking place.
- 3.3 Phase one of physical maintenance of the roost building has recently occurred. A bid has been submitted for phase two, (winter 2006/7, CCW).
- 3.4 On going field surveys for foraging bats (all species) may help to locate the other colony.

4. Proposed targets (Including target goals where appropriate)

- 4.1 Maintain known maternity population at 2005 level (120 individuals)
- 4.2 Encourage growth at current rates by improved conditions (5% per annum).

5. Proposed actions and key partners for Greater horseshoe bat

Action	Key Partners		Timescale
	Lead	Support	
1. Policy and Legislation			
1.1 Ensure policies and strategies do not adversely affect populations of greater horseshoe bat.	MCC	CCW, WAG	Ongoing
1.2 Ensure greater horseshoe bat is fully considered when assessing any development, which may impact upon the species.	MCC	CCW, Local bat experts	Ongoing
1.3 When there is no alternative ensure that appropriate mitigation or compensation measures for greater horseshoe bat are used during development.	MCC	CCW	Ongoing
1.4 Ensure opportunities for enhancing habitat for greater horseshoe bat are used during the planning process	MCC		Ongoing
1.5 Ensure appropriate procedures	MCC		When available

for consideration of greater horseshoe bats are included in the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Conversion of Agricultural Buildings.			
2. Funding / Resources			
2.1 Support increased survey activity to locate the second roost.	MCC	BCT, Monmouthshire Bat Group	2006
2.2 Consider small grant aid where this would protect or enhance habitat through existing schemes.	CCW	MCC	Ongoing
3. Site Protection and Designation			
3.1 Ensure protection of the known Monmouthshire hibernation sites.	CCW	MCC	2007
4. Habitat and Site Management			
4.1 Where possible, ensure that known habitat is appropriately managed e.g. through site management agreements and funding incentives.	CCW		2010
4.2 Ensure that greater horseshoe bat is included on site management documents for all relevant SSSIs.	CCW		2007
5. Habitat Creation / Restoration			
5.1 Seek to increase the available foraging habitat at known sites and attempt to link up fragmented habitat.	CCW	MCC, FCW	2008?
6. Survey and monitoring			
6.1 Expand voluntary sector through training and funding to increase IT and bat skills.	BCT	CCW, MCC, Monmouthshire Bat Group	4 volunteers 2006, 2007
7. Information and Databases			
7.1 Map known foraging areas, flight lines and subsidiary roosts within Monmouthshire.	CCW	MCC, Monmouthshire Bat Group	2006?
7.2 Undertake an annual review of new data and information on the species.	CCW	MCC, Local bat expert	Annual
8. Communication -Advisory			
8.1 Encourage graziers within the core foraging areas to use extensive methods and minimise Avermectin use.	WAG	BCT, CCW, DEFRA, NE	2009?
8.2 Make all Local Authority	MCC	CCW,	2006?

environmental sections fully aware of the general areas of roost location and extent of habitat use within the county.		Local bat expert	
8.3 Compose a list of actions, which may adversely affect roosts and important habitat.	CCW	Local Bat expert	2007
9. Action Plan Process / Links to other Plans			
9.1 Produce Habitat Action Plans for woodland, linear features and the built environment.	MCC	Biodiversity Partnership	March 2007
9.2 Link with WAG Trunk Road Estate BAP where any action in Monmouth may affect species, including lighting, widening, tree or shrub removal. In particular the A40 at Monmouth.	WAG	MCC, CCW, GWT, Local bat expert	Ongoing
9.3 Establish links with Herefordshire in order to coordinate actions on feeding range	MCC	Monmouthshire Bat Group	2008

6. Abbreviations

BCT	Bat Conservation Trust
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
FCW	Forestry Commission Wales
MCC	Monmouthshire County Council
MCS	Monmouthshire Countryside Service
MDC	Monmouthshire Development Control
MDP	Monmouthshire Development Plans
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government

7. Links to other plans

This plan should be considered in conjunction with the Built Environment Habitat Action Plan and Species Action Plans for other bat species.

8. References

UK Biodiversity Group Tranche 2 Action Plans - Volume I: Vertebrates and vascular plants (June 1998, Tranche 2, Vol I, p43)