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John Wattam
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Old School House
36 Boston Road
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15th January 2018

Dear John,

Hibernation survey for bats at Dovehirne Farm, West Pinchbeck, Lincolnshire

I am writing to confirm the results following our recent hibernation survey at the above site. The survey was undertaken by Ian Nixon (registered to use Natural England Class Licences WML-CL19 and WML-CL20 to survey bats; registration numbers 2015-12336-CLS-CLS, 2015-12338-CLS-CLS respectively) and Gemma Watkinson on 10th January 2018.

This hibernation survey was required following an assessment of the barn buildings at Dovehirne Farm in September 2017, which found that the buildings have potential to support bats during the hibernation season. The full results of the building assessments are reported in 'Ecology and Protected Species Survey, Dovehirne Farm, Bourne Road, West Pinchbeck, Lincolnshire – September 2017'.

Survey methods

A high-powered torch (to scan for niches), a low powered torch (to inspect individual niches), binoculars, hand-held mirrors and ladders were used to investigate the existing barn buildings. All gaps and cracks within the brickwork, and dark corners with potential for hibernating bats were checked for the presence of bats where it was safe to do so.

Survey results

Three pipistrelle *Pipistrellus sp*. bats were found hibernating within the two-storey barn, between the timber beams that support the first floor. The locations of the hibernating bats are shown in Figure 1 below.

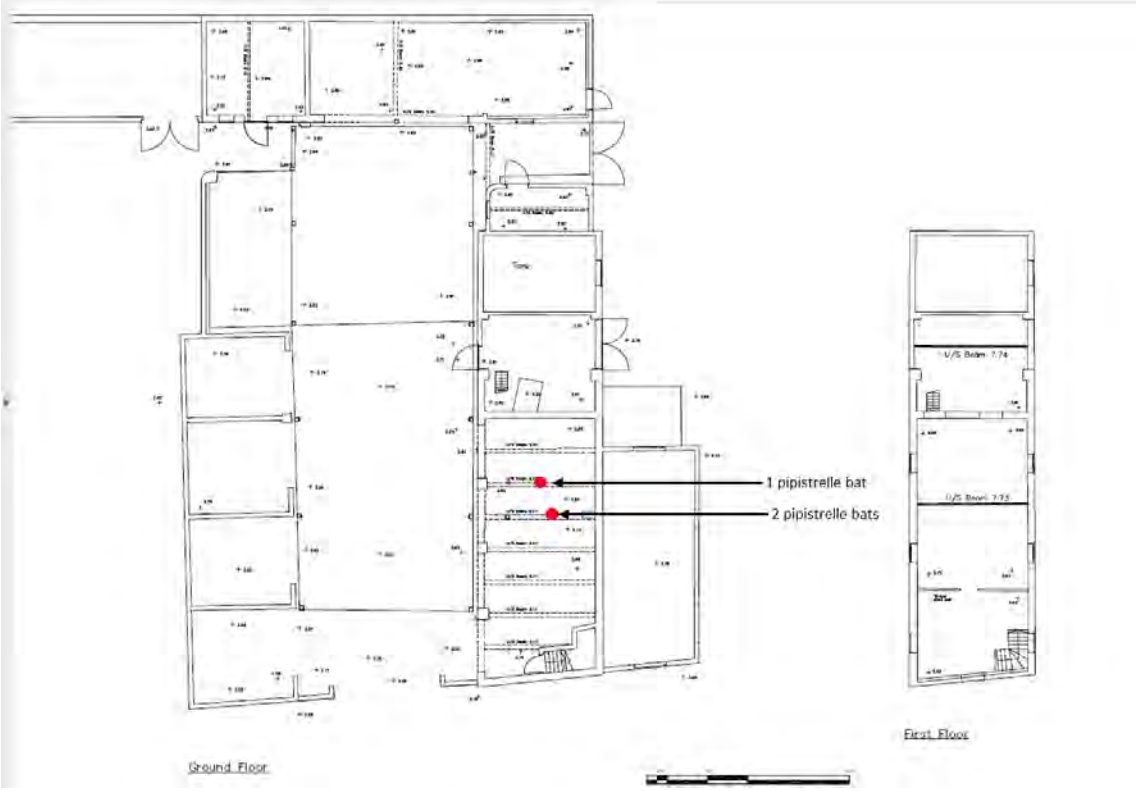
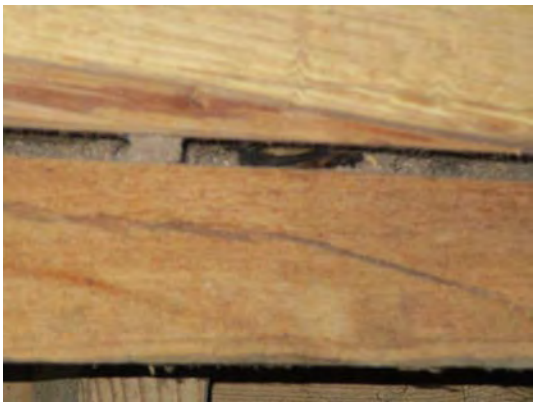


Figure 1: Location of hibernating bats found



Photograph 1: Single pipistrelle bat hibernating between timber beams

Photograph 2: Two hibernating pipistrelle bats

Legal protection

In England, Scotland and Wales, all bats are strictly protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended); in England and Wales this legislation has been amended and strengthened by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000.

Bats are also protected by European legislation; the EC Habitats Directive is transposed into UK law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 – often referred to as 'The Habitat Regs'.

Taken together, all this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a group of bats where the disturbance is likely to significantly affect the ability of the animals to survive, breed, or nurture their young or likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species whether in a roost or not
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place of a bat
- Possess a bat (alive or dead) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead) or parts of bats

A roost is defined as being ‘any structure or place that is used for shelter or protection’, and since bats regularly move roost site throughout the year, a roost retains such designation whether or not bats are present at the time.

Recommendations

The results of this hibernation survey will contribute to informing the mitigation strategy that will support the European Protected Species Licence application for this site. The survey indicates that the existing brick barn buildings are used by small numbers of hibernating pipistrelle bats. Therefore, any work on the buildings must commence outside the main hibernation period i.e. before late October or after early April. This minimises the potential to disturb bats which may be using the buildings for hibernation.

Further survey work will be conducted during the active season (May – August) to gather information on the types of roost, species and numbers of bats present within the buildings. The results of these surveys together with the results from this hibernation survey will be used to develop a detailed mitigation strategy and Method Statement for the EPS licence application.

Yours Sincerely

Gemma Watkinson