

What to do if you find a grounded bat

Sometimes people will find a grounded bat that may just be exhausted. It may be injured or in danger from passing cats so it is better to take it into captivity temporarily. Most bats found in houses are usually just young bats that are still trying to master the art of flying! It is important to note that you should never try to catch a flying bat as you may injure it severely.

If you feel confident that you can move the animal **without** physically touching it or injuring it, proceed to step one. Otherwise, contact your local bat worker immediately.



1. **Wait until the animal is motionless.** A bat that is flying is almost impossible to catch, and you have a greater chance of injuring the bat if you attempt to capture it while it is airborne. In addition, bats that are caught while flying frequently panic and attempt to bite. Be patient. Wait until the bat lands and is still, and then proceed to step 2



2. **Contain the bat.** Quietly approach the bat, and wearing thick gloves or using a thick towel, gather the bat up (holding it securely but not tightly) and place it into a box with a lid (an old ice cream container or shoe box with air holes). Or instead, simply place a box over the bat where it has landed. Then, take a piece of cardboard (the back of an old cereal box would work well) and gently slide it between the box and the surface the bat is on (i.e. floor, wall or ceiling). Keeping the cardboard in place, gently turn the container right side up. We recommend you line the box with kitchen roll for the bat to hang to and a jam jar lid filled with water as bats tend to get dehydrated. Do not place the bat in a bird cage or container with small openings. Bats are very intelligent and can easily squeeze through a 1/4 x 1/2 inch crack. Keep the bat in a dark heated area – an airing cupboard or ‘hot press’ is ideal.



3. **Call a local bat worker** – see contact details. Sometimes young bats, which are inexperienced flyers, will become exhausted before finding the way out. They may try to land on a wall or curtains, or they may crash land on furniture or the floor. In this case, you should **contain the bat** as described overleaf or **contact your local bat worker**.

BAT WORKERS:

Derry/Strabane/Limavady:

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Help
us put
bats
on the
map!



Share your sighting...

Northern Ireland Bat Group
National Museums Northern Ireland
153 Bangor Road, CULTRA, Co. Down, BT18 0EU
Tel: **028 9039 5264** (direct line) | Fax: **028 9039 5004**
www.bats-ni.org.uk

Photos courtesy of Bat Conservation Trust, Austin Hopkirk and Karen Healy.

iprnt 02871 267509



**Northern Ireland
BAT GROUP**

THE NORTH WEST BAT PROJECT

www.bats-ni.org.uk



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What is the North West Bat Project?

Volunteer training and education programme designed to raise awareness on bats in the North West and to gather more records for the region.

The project is funded by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Challenge Fund, Department for the Environment and is administered by Northern Ireland Environment Link.

Batty Facts



- There are 8 species of bats in Northern Ireland
- Bats are the only mammal in the world capable of true flight
- Female bats give birth to live young
- Bats have only one baby or pup each year
- Bats do not build nests
- Bats can live in buildings, trees and caves
- Their habitat is called a roost
- Bats belong to the order 'Chiroptera' meaning 'Hand wing' as bats fly using their hands
- Bats eat insects such as midges and moths
- A single bat can eat up to 3,500 insects in one night!
- All our bats hibernate in winter
- Bats in Ireland and UK are protected by law
- In Britain and Ireland all bat species and their roosts are legally protected, by both domestic and international legislation. This means you will be committing a criminal offence if you:

- ◆ Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- ◆ Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- ◆ Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- ◆ Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
- ◆ Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost

Batty myths (*that are, well batty!*)

- **Bats do not drink your blood:** Irish and UK bats only eat insects. If you lived in South America you might come across the Vampire Bat which feeds on blood of livestock.
- **Bats do not get tangled in your hair.** This is a common myth, the only reason a bat may fly close to you is to eat the midges and moths that surround you so really they are trying to do you a favour!
- **Bats are not blind.** The saying 'As blind as a bat' is not actually true as bats have good eyesight. They can even see in darkness using a special skill called echo location. They shout loudly and listen for the echo that bounces back from a flying insect – this is how they find their food.



Bat Species in the North West

Below are some species you may find in the North West



- **Pipistrelle:** There are three species of pipistrelle including common, soprano and nathusius'. Pipistrelle's are our smallest bat, they are so small they can fit into a matchbox. They can be seen flying around gardens in summer months.



- **Leisler's Bat:** This is Ireland's biggest bat, they are rare in Europe and common in Ireland so we have an important population of this species. They are often found roosting in house roofs and can be seen flying high over hedgerows and trees in local parks.



- **Daubenton's bat:** Also known as the water bat or hairy footed bat this species can be found on rivers, lakes and ponds where they snatch insects from the surface of the water. They are often found roosting in holes in trees.



- **Brown long eared bat:** Their large ears are so sensitive and they use them to locate moths by hearing the fluttering movements of their wings. They often roost in roof voids or large old buildings.

Contact your local biodiversity officer to find out dates for guided bat walks and events.

Visit www.derrycity.gov.uk
www.colerainebc.gov.uk
www.omagh.gov.uk

- **Creggan Country Park**
Host to Common pip, soprano pip, Leisler and Daubenton's bat
- **Brooke Park**
- **Bay Road Park**
- **Gransha woodland**
Common and soprano pipistrelle, Leisler's bat and Brown Long Eared Bat
- **Prehen Wood**
- **Swan Park, Buncrana**
- **Loughmacrory, Omagh**
- **Riverside Park, Ballymoney**

How you can help bats



- Volunteer with the North West Bat Project;
- Plant night scented plants in your garden such as honeysuckle and night-scented stock to encourage insects and provide food source for bats;
- Visit bats.org.uk and record sightings on the Big Bat Map;
- Avoid using pesticides in your garden;
- Put up a bat box to provide a much needed home for bats. Visit www.bats.org.uk for details on how to make your own;
- Join the Northern Ireland Bat Group – log on to our website to download the membership form.