Moor Close Farm, Rimington

BAT SURVEY REPORT

July 2026

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction and Report Aims

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake bat surveys of a barn at Moor Close Farm, Whyta Lane, Rimington BB7 4EQ. The assessment was carried out to inform proposals for the conversion of the barn for residential use.

The primary aim of the bat surveys was to gather information on the presence or absence of a bat roost at the property. This report presents the results of the bat surveys and provides all the necessary data, assessment and guidance to satisfy the relevant planning and conservation policy obligations and legislative framework. Details of the legislation afforded to bats is presented in Appendix A.

In addition to bats, other potential ecological constraints relevant to the proposal including **nesting birds and barn owl** were also documented where applicable.

1.2 Site Description

Moor Close Farm is situated within a rural landscape approximately 1–2km south of the settlements of Rimington, Newby and Howgill, at grid reference SD 82142 44819. The farm lies at approximately 218 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The surrounding area comprises a network of pasture fields enclosed by dry stone walls, interspersed with occasional farmsteads and small woodland plantations typical of the wider agricultural setting.

The barn subject to assessment is attached to the east side of the farmhouse. Figure 1.1 presents an aerial image of the site location, and Plate 1.1 provides a photograph of the barn taken in June 2026.

Figure 1.1. Property location (imagery dated 18/07/2022).

Plate 1.1. Barn

2 METHODS

2.1 Survey Personnel

The preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken by Ryan Knight MCIEEM who holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence for bats (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) and has held this licence for over 13 years. Ryan has also acted as the named ecologist on numerous European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences issued by Natural England (NE) which covered several bat species and roost types including maternity, hibernation and day roosts.

2.2 Overarching Guidance

The preliminary bat roost assessment was primarily based on the methods described in 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). Bat Conservation Trust, London.' (Collins, J., (ed.) (2023).

The level of detail in this document is considered proportionate to the scale of the project, its location and the complexity of potential impacts to bats that may arise as a result of the proposal.

2.3 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

A preliminary bat roost assessment of the property was undertaken on 17 June 2026. The assessment involved a visual inspection of the property to search for bats and evidence of bats (e.g., droppings) and an appraisal of the extent and suitability of any potential bat roost features present. The assessment included the use of a torch, ladders and a digital endoscope.

Other considerations which would influence the suitability of the property for use by bats were also taken into account. This included the site location, environmental conditions including expected night time lighting levels and the suitability of the surrounding habitats. This information was gathered from the site survey and web-based mapping sources (i.e., Google Earth).

Following the assessment, the building was assigned a bat roost suitability category of none, negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost based on the collated information. Table 2.1 provides further context to these bat suitability categories.

Table 2.1. Bat roost potential categories for structures (adapted from Collins, 2023)

Bat Category	Description of Roosting Habitats
Confirmed Roost	Evidence of a confirmed roost would include observations (visual and aural) of bats inside the building or within internal and / or external walls. The presence of accumulations of bat droppings within a structure or on an external surface below a roost entrance is also evidence of a roost site.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts e.g., maternity or classic hibernation site.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and / or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by large numbers of bats.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
None	No features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices / suitable shelter on all ground / underground levels.

2.3.1 Dusk Emergence Bat Survey

With respect to the moderate roost suitability classification of the structure, two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on 22 June 2026 and 14 July 2026 to gather further information on the presence or absence of a bat roost. This level of survey effort accords with the guidance (Collins 2023) for buildings assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats.

In consideration of the size, layout, and aspects of the structure, for the first visit, two survey positions were used to obtain clear sightlines of all potential roost features identified during the preliminary roost assessment. A single survey position was considered sufficient for the second visit as potential roost features were focused on the south elevation. However, for the second visit an NVA system was also placed inside the barn. These survey positions enabled surveyors to record any bats emerging from the building, including species and numbers, should a roost be present.

All additional bat activity not associated with emergence was also recorded, including flight direction, type of activity, timing, and species. The survey commenced at least 15 minutes before sunset and continued for a minimum of 1 hour 30 minutes after sunset.

All survey positions comprised surveyors equipped with full-spectrum bat detectors, supplemented by infra-red (IR) cameras with sufficient IR illumination and/or a thermal imaging monocular. These systems are collectively referred to as Night Vision Aids (NVAs).

All NVA footage was fully reviewed using desktop media-player software following completion of the survey. In addition, all recorded bat calls were downloaded and analysed using appropriate software (e.g. BatExplorer) to ensure that any notable bat activity not detected in real time was identified. Table 2.2 details the survey times, weather conditions, equipment used, and survey positions.

Table 2.2. Survey conditions and equipment

Date	22 June 2026	14 July 2026
Buildings	Barn	Barn
Sunset	21:45	21:33
Survey duration	21:30 to 23:00	21:18 to 23:05
Weather conditions	• Dry throughout • 19°C at survey start • 16°C at survey end • 15% cloud cover • Wind 1 (Beaufort Scale) with occasional gusts of 3 on north side.	• Dry throughout • 16°C at survey start • 15°C at survey end • 10% cloud cover • Wind 1
Personnel & equipment	• Ryan Knight (RK) - Elekon Batlogger M2 Bat Detector (full spectrum) and a Guide TK612 Gen2 Thermal Imaging Monocular with a viewing screen. • Catherine Wood (CW) (Level 2 Licence. 2016-24176-CLS-CLS) – Peersonic RPA3 (full spectrum) and x1 Nightfox Nova IR binoculars with x1 Nightfox XC5 torch.	• RK - Elekon Batlogger M2 Bat Detector (full spectrum) and 1no. Guide TK612 Gen2 Thermal Imaging Monocular with a viewing screen. • Unmanned position inside barn: Elekon Batlogger M2 Bat Detector (full spectrum) and a Guide TK612 Gen2 Thermal Imaging Monocular.

Survey positions **Red = 22 June 2026** **Blue = 14 July 2026**	

2.4 Assessment Comments

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The assessment was undertaken during the main active season for bats (April to October) when signs of a bat roost are most evident. The floors of the barn were covered in a high amount of detritus which can inhibit the identification of bat droppings.

All areas of the property were accessible.

Dusk Emergence Surveys

The surveys were undertaken within the main bat activity period during weather conditions deemed suitable to conduct bat surveys in accordance with the guidance (Collins, 2023). Overall, no significant constraints to the surveys were encountered.

General

This report will remain valid for a period of 24 months from the date of issue. An ecologist should be contacted for advice on the revalidation requirements of the report if planning permission is not obtained (if required) or works do not commence within this time period.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Site Survey

3.1.1 Building Descriptions and Potential Roost Features

Please also refer to Plates 3.1 – 3.3 and photos in Appendix B which provide further supporting information for the assessment.

Barn

The barn dates from the early 19th century and is a stone construction. There are three sections comprising the original stone barn, a small attached stone outbuilding and a later extension used as a garage. The original barn is currently disused.

The extension is a part brick and part concrete block construction which is rendered on the west walls. The north elevation of the garage is partially built into the hillside thereby only a very short (<1m) section of blockwork was exposed. The entire roof is covered with corrugated tin sheets. The garage has a single pitched roof and the barn has a ridge roof. The barn has a traditional timber roof construction, comprising trusses and purlins. The garage roof underside is partially covered in timber cladding.

The external stone work of the barn was in relatively good repair throughout with much of the mortar pointing solid. There were 2-3 locations on the south elevation where mortar was missing; however, no hidden, deep crevices were present. The timber bargeboards on the south and east elevation were warped and coming away from the wall. The gaps underneath were considered too wide and exposed for use by bats.

There were numerous open gaps at the roof verge on the east elevation allowing potential access for bats into the internal space. There were also gaps around the main entrance and an upper floor window aperture on the south elevation which provide access to the internal features of the barn.

The internal space of the garage was very light throughout and the garage is actively used. No potential roost features were observed in the walls or roof underside.

The barn is open from floor to ceiling with no haylofts. The conditions were relatively dark. The majority of the inner stonework of the barn was solidly pointed. However, the pointing of the eastern inner wall along with a corner of the western inner was degraded. Most of the gaps were not recessed and approximately ten suitable gaps for bats were recorded throughout the stonework. There was also one gap under a timber purlin on the west wall. These potential roost features were considered to be the main areas of suitability for bats.

The stone extension on the east side of the barn forms a small room with a single pitched corrugated sheet roof. No potential roost features were noted on the section of the barn.

3.1.2 Habitat Description

The barn is located within a remote rural landscape dominated by a network of improved pasture fields bound by tree lines. The barn is also situated on the north side of a hillside overlooking a valley which contains Ings Beck and associated tree lines. The tree lines provide sheltered connective foraging features for bats within the immediate area of the barn. The barn and attached farm also provide shelter for foraging bats. Factors that may adversely affect bat activity include the hillside location as the site is likely to be more exposed to inclement weather conditions (i.e. wind).

Given the availability of connective habitats and foraging features, overall bat activity in the immediate vicinity of the site was expected to be moderate prior to the dusk emergence bat surveys.

3.1.3 Evidence of Bats and Bat Roost Suitability

No evidence of a bat roost was observed. Table 3.2 provides an overview of the main survey findings and a bat roost suitability evaluation. Based on the collated information, the barn was considered to offer a moderate roost suitability for bats.

Table 3.2. Overview of results

Building	Potential roost features	Evidence of bats	Bat roost suitability
Barn	• Several crevices within the internal walls on localised areas including the east aspect and a corner of the west aspect. • Gaps under the roof verge and gaps around doorways and window apertures which provide access to the interior of the barn. • Shallow gaps in the stonework of the south elevation. • Roosting opportunities within the timber roof framework.	None	Moderate

Plates. Examples of potential roost features

Plates 3.1a – 3.1d Examples of cavities in stonework.	

	
Plate 3.2. Gap under purlin on east wall.	
Plates 3.3a – 3.3b. Gaps leading to inner space of barn.	

3.2 Dusk Emergence Survey

The barn was confirmed to support a bat roost. The most relevant findings of the dusk emergence surveys are provided in Table 3.3 and a summary of general activity is provided in Table 3.4.

22 June 2026

A Myotis bat species was observed to emerge from the barn around the timber boarding on the upper aperture on the south elevation at 22:23 (38 minutes after sunset). Prior to emergence, a bat was seen flying inside the barn. This pre-emergence flight activity is common for Myotis species (Natterer's bat, whiskered bat, Brandt's bat or Daubenton's bat). The recorded bat call was not of a sufficient quality to confidently confirm species.

The vast majority of bat activity was common pipistrelle with up to 3 bats foraging around the barn and house. A low number of soprano pipistrelle calls were recorded later in the survey. Other species included noctule bat. Foraging activity of Myotis species was recorded and this was identified to be a whiskered bat based on the call parameters of the recording.

14 July 2026

A Myotis species was again observed to emerge from the same location at 22:04 (31 minutes after sunset). The NVA placed within the inside of the barn covered the east sections; however, the bat did not emerge from this end of the barn. It is therefore likely that the roost point is within a crevice in the western wall**.**

The bat was confirmed to be a whiskered bat upon analysis of the bat calls.

General bat activity was similar to the first survey, with moderate levels of common pipistrelle activity and occasional foraging of soprano pipistrelle and whiskered bat.

Table 3.3. Main Results

Date	Description	Location
22 June and 14 July 2026	Emergence of Myotis bat species from upper window aperture. Species highly likely to be whiskered bat as confirmed during second visit. Bat recorded flying within barn for 3 mins prior to emerging.	 

3.3 Nesting Birds

The following evidence of nesting birds was found in the barn:

- An active jackdaw's nest on a wall ledge within the garage.
- A former jackdaw's nest on a wall ledge of the barn.
- A disused swallow's nest on a roof timber in the barn.

No swallows were observed entering the building. The barn is likely to be used as a nest site by other species (e.g., blue tit, wren, blackbird, pied wagtail etc).

3.4 Barn owl

A single, old barn owl pellet was observed on the floor of the barn. There was also a small extent of light faecal splashing on a roof timber. This evidence suggests that the barn was a very occasionally used roosting site. It does not appear to have been used by barn owl for some time.

No barn owl activity was observed during the dusk emergence surveys and no evidence of nesting was identified during the building inspection.

4 EVALUATION

4.1 Bats

The barn has been confirmed to support a whiskered bat roost. Table 4.1 provides the roost details. The roost is classified as a day roost (non-breeding roosts used regularly by solitary or low numbers of bats throughout the summer). No evidence of a maternity roost was recorded.

Whiskered bat day roosts within buildings are less common in east Lancashire as compared to pipistrelle species and brown long-eared bats; however, such roosts are considered to be of relatively low conservation significance and good practice working measures (under licence) can be easily applied to mitigate any potential impacts to such roosts.

Table 4.1. Overview of confirmed bat roosts

Species	Roost Count	Roost description	Roost Type
Whiskered bat	1	Likely roosting in crevice on western wall. Whiskered bats often utilise the open space of a barn for pre-emergence flight activity. The barn should be treated as a single functional roost unit for licensing purposes.	Day

In the absence of mitigation, the proposed conversion of the barn will result in the uncompensated loss of the bat roost. The work also risks direct harm to the bat via the potential killing and injury during such roof work.

All bat species and their roosts are legally protected through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations) as a European Protected Species (EPS). They also receive protection through inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Appendix A provides details of this legislation.

Derogation from the legislative prohibitions is transposed into the Habitats Regulations by way of a licensing regime that allows what would otherwise be an unlawful act to be carried out lawfully. Natural England are the relevant licensing authority in England and issue such licences on receipt of certain information including a robust assessment of the roost type, species and numbers of bats using the roost. This information has been gathered via the surveys detailed in this report.

It should be noted that for this particular proposal and roost types, the Natural England licence application will not require the completion of a Reasoned Statement and therefore, information relating to two of the three licensing tests (overriding public interest and satisfactory alternatives) is not required. The Method Statement in Section 5 seeks to address the Favourable Conservation Status test only. It should also be noted that in this instance, the roost types and low scale of impacts also qualifies for the low impact licence scheme which offers a more streamlined licensing approach.

Standard mitigation measures as stated within the licence MUST be followed and overseen by the named applicant and named ecologist who are legally bound by the terms and conditions of the licence. Such mitigation measures are outlined within Section 5. Carrying out such works

without a licence or outside the terms of conditions of a granted licence may result in prosecution.

4.2 Nesting Birds

General

All wild birds in the UK are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

The nesting bird season is generally accepted as March to September for general species. In the absence of mitigation, the works could potentially impact the nesting sites. Mitigation recommendations for nesting birds are provided in Section 5.

4.3 Barn owl

The barn was found to be an historical roosting site for barn owl. No evidence of nesting barn owl was observed. The permanent loss of the roost site is not anticipated to have a significant adverse effect on local barn owl populations. Whilst mitigation is not strictly required, the applicant may wish to consider the provision of alternative roosting opportunities for barn owl as outlined in section 5.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Method Statement (bats)

The below information is provided to demonstrate how the favourable conservation status of the identified bat species will be maintained following the approval of an EPS mitigation licence application. These works will be undertaken once a mitigation licence has been granted.

- With respect to the deep stone crevices in the inner and outer stonework, it is advised that any development works should avoid the hibernation period for bats (November to February / March). Any works potentially affecting bat roosts should be undertaken in the main active period (April to mid-October).
- A single bat box is to be placed on an adjacent tree (under the ownership of the applicant) in order to house any captured bats and to provide roosting provision throughout the duration of the works. This bat box will comprise a Greenwoods cavity bat box. The box can be left in perpetuity as an enhancement measure.
- Before works commence, the ecologist named on the mitigation licence (the Named Ecologist) or Accredited Agent will provide a toolbox talk to the contractors in order to explain the presence of bats, their legal protection, roles and responsibilities, the proposed method of working, basic identification of bats and procedures should a bat or evidence of a bat be found
- A thorough inspection of the barn will be undertaken prior to commencement.
- The Named Ecologist or Accredited Agent will supervise the soft destruction of the bat roosts. The removal of the roof is likely to inhibit bats from using the roost site. If the bat is present during the supervision, it will be captured by the Named Ecologist or Accredited Agent.
- Where capture and/or handling of bats are necessary, only the Named Ecologist or Accredited Agent may do so. Capture/handling/exclusion of bats must only be undertaken in conditions suitable for bats to be active. The bat will be given a health check and then each bat placed carefully inside a draw-string calico cloth holding bag or similar for transferring to the bat box.
- In the unexpected event that a bat is discovered outside of times where works will be supervised, contractors will be advised to contact the Named Ecologist who will travel to site to collect. Contractors will be specifically forbidden to handle bats. Contractors will be advised that if it is necessary to remove a bat to avoid it being harmed, gloves MUST be worn. It should be carefully placed in a cardboard box and kept in the dark in a quiet place until the Named Ecologist arrives on site.
- A single bat box (Greenwoods two cavity bat box) is to be fixed onto the wall of the barn upon completion of the external renovation work as suitable compensation for the whiskered bat roost.
- No new external lighting installations are anticipated on the barn.

5.2 Nesting Birds

General

It is typically recommended that any works with the potential to affect bird nests are undertaken outside the main nesting-bird season (March–August inclusive). Where this is not achievable, any works that may impact nesting birds must be preceded by a nesting-bird check undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist. If an active nest is identified, it must be left undisturbed and retained in situ until it is no longer in use.

Compensation and Enhancements

At least two nest boxes are recommended to be installed on the barn post-development. These can be placed on external walls.

Barn Owl

A barn owl box is recommended to be installed in one of the mature trees located within the grounds of the site.

The details of all bird boxes can be submitted as a post permission matter.

APPENDIX A. LEGISLATION FOR BATS

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

All bat species in England are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Section 9 of the Act makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5. In addition, it is an offence to (intentionally or recklessly):

- Damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- Disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Bats are listed within Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations) as European Protected Species of animals. Part 3 (Protection of animals); Regulation 43 (1) of the Habitats Regulations makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species;
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal; or
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

For the purposes of the legislation, the disturbance of wild animals includes any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or to reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Where it is likely that a proposed scheme would result in contravention of this legislation, a European Protected Species mitigation licence would be required to allow the works to proceed. As part of this process, the application must meet 'three tests' for licensing under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Planning guidance and case law also confirm that local authorities have a statutory duty under the Regulations to have regard to these three tests when deciding whether to grant planning permission. The three tests are as follows:

- Regulation 55 (2) (e) states that a derogation licence can only be issued for preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
- Regulation 55 (9) (a): that there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- Regulation 55 (9) (b): that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving or enhancing biodiversity. The Section 41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in their duty to further the general biodiversity objective when exercising their functions, under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006. This is also referred to as a 'biodiversity duty' which was strengthened by the Environment Act 2021. Bat species known to be present in the north of England and included on the Section 41 list comprise soprano pipistrelle, noctule and brown long-eared bat.

APPENDIX B. PHOTOS & NVA SCREENSHOTS

Photos

Photo 1. East elevation.	
Photos 2a – 2b. North elevation.	

	
Photo 3. West elevation.	

Photo 4. Internal space of garage.	
Photos 5a – 5b Internal space of barn.	

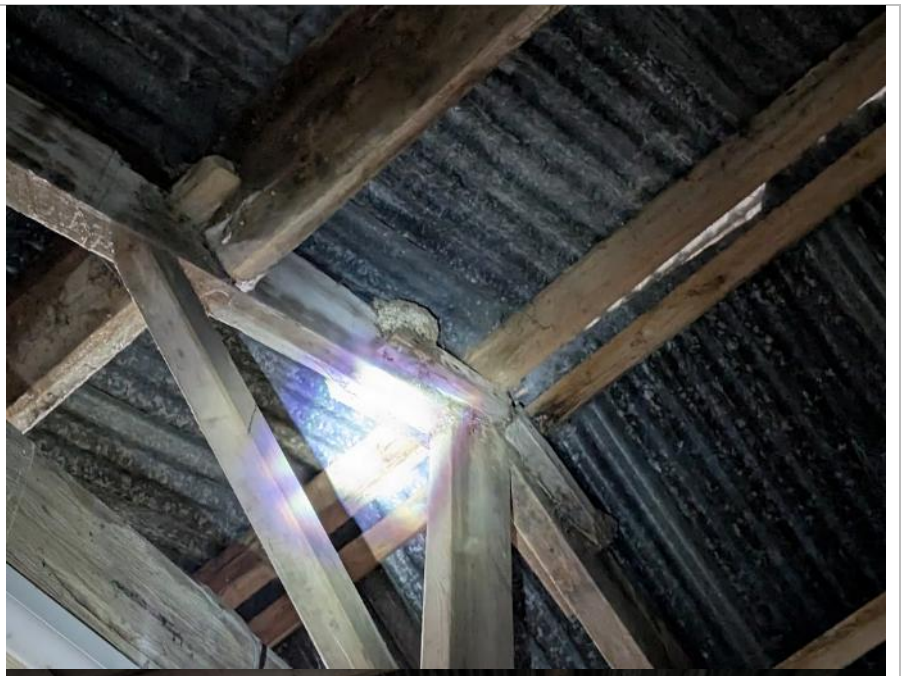
	

Photos 6a – 6c

6a: Inactive swallows' nest.

6b: Location of jackdaw nest.

6c: Old barn owl pellet.



NVA Screenshots


22/06/2026 23:18:23


14/07/2026 23:06:21


14/07/2026 23:02:08