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Ecology**

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (BATS)

**FOURTEEN LOCKS CANAL VISITORS CENTRE,
NEWPORT**

JULY 2025

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Summary

Julie Player Ecology was commissioned by Newport Council (thereby referred to as 'the client') to undertake bat activity surveys (BAS), to inform the demolition of the Fourteen Locks Canal Visitors Centre, Newport, to allow for the construction of a new visitor's centre on site. All surveys were undertaken following the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins 2023).

A preliminary roost assessment (PRA) was undertaken by Ecology Wales in December 2024 that identified several potential access points for roosting bats into the building, therefore two bat surveys were recommended. The bat activity surveys were undertaken in on the 3rd June 2025 and the 24th June 2025.

No bats were recorded emerging from the building; therefore, a bat roost will not be directly impacted as part of the proposed works and therefore a bat licence will not be required. The immediate surrounding habitat (canal, pond, treelines and woodland) is used by commuting and foraging bats (namely Common and Soprano Pipistrelle, Myotis and Brown Long Eared bats). Based on the results of the surveys undertaken my recommendations are outlined below: -

- The treeline to the west of the building, the pond, canal and woodland blocks to the east should be kept as dark corridors for bats (and other nocturnal species that may be present), by ensuring there is no additional light spill from the new building at night and ensure that no new temporary or permanent artificial lighting is installed.
- As outlined in the Ecology Wales report, if possible, the building should be demolished between September and February to minimise potential impacts on nesting birds. If this is not possible, a suitably trained ecologist will need undertake a survey of the building to determine if nesting birds are present.
- Install a bat box, and/or incorporate a bat brick or ridge tile into the design of the new building.
- Incorporate a sparrow terrace of swift box in into the design of the new building and/or install a small bird nest box onto the new building.

1 Introduction

1.2 Background

Julie Player Ecology was commissioned by Newport Council (thereby referred to as 'the client') to undertake bat activity surveys (BAS), to inform the demolition of the current visitor centre (thereby referred to as 'the site') to allow for the construction of a new visitor's centre.

A preliminary roost assessment (PRA) was undertaken by Ecology Wales in December 2024 that identified several potential access points for roosting bats into the building, therefore two bat surveys were recommended.

This report has been produced to provide an ecological overview (in relation to bats), and to determine the potential ecological impacts of the proposed works and recommend mitigation if required.

1.3 Site Description

The fourteen locks canal visitors centre is situated in Rogerstone, Newport at grid reference: ST 27913 88619. The fourteen locks canal and pond are located immediately south, south east and south west of the visitor's centre, with broadleaved woodland blocks located to the east, a line of broadleaved trees to the west, grassland to the north and residential houses estates to the south and west of the building.



Figure 1 – Aerial image of the site, the red line shows the boundary of the visitor's centre (Imagery date 14th June 2023).

2. Methodology

2.2 Bat Emergence Surveys

Two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on the building on the 3rd June 2025 and 24th June 2025 as per the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2023). The surveys commenced 15 minutes before dusk and continued for 1 hour 30 minutes after dusk.

Elkon batloggers and Elkon batscanners were used by surveyors during the survey where they observed potential roosting features around the building during the surveys to determine if bats emerged/re-entered the building. They also noted down bat behaviour around the site, including foraging, commuting and social activity.

Nightfox Whiskered Infrared Night Vision cameras and a Thermal Master DV2 camera were also used to record activity during the survey.

2.3 Surveyor information

The BAS were led by Julie Player. Julie has worked as an ecological consultant since 2012, she is experienced in undertaking bat, dormouse and great crested newt surveys and holds licences for these species in both Wales and England. Julie is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Two additional surveyors assisted with the BAS surveys, the assistants are experienced bat surveyors who are confident in identifying bats emerging from the roost, identifying species through echolocation calls on the detectors and at identifying bat behaviours (e.g., commuting, foraging).

3. Results

3.2 Bat Activity Surveys

The weather conditions for the dusk surveys are outlined in table 1 below, a summary of bat activity results are outlined below and can be seen in Appendix 1.

Table 1 - Weather conditions during bat activity surveys

Date (Dusk/Dawn survey)	Time	Temperature °C (avg)	Cloud (Oktas)	Wind (Beaufort)	Rain
03/06/2025 – Dusk Survey	Start: - 21.07 Dusk: - 21.22 Finish: - 22.52	12	3	0	Nil
24/06/2025 – Dusk Survey	Start: - 21.20 Dusk: - 21.35 Finish: - 23.05	16	8	1	Light drizzle at start of survey which stopped after approx. 20 mins

3rd June 2025 Dusk Bat Activity Survey Results

The first bat recorded was a common pipistrelle bat commuting along the treeline to the west of the building at 21.25. Other species recorded during the survey include Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule, Myotis sp and Brown Long Eared bats foraging above the pond and commuting along treelines to the east of the building and along the canal.

24th June 2025 Dusk Bat Activity Survey Results

The first bat recorded was a common pipistrelle bat commuting along the treeline to the west of the building towards the pond and canal at 21.49. The survey was relatively quiet compared to the survey undertaken on the 3rd June 2025, with a small number of Soprano Pipistrelle and Myotis bats commuting along the canal and foraging over the pond.

Snapshot images taken from the infrared and thermal cameras during the surveys are shown in table 2 below.

Table 2 – Example images taken from cameras used during the surveys





4. Interpretation of Results

An interpretation of the results are as follows:

No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the dusk emergence surveys. The demolition will not have a negative impact on roosting bats; therefore, a bat licence will not be required.

The immediate surrounding habitat (treeline, pond, canal and woodland blocks) and treeline to the west of the building are used by foraging and commuting bats. Although a bat roost will not be directly impacted as part of the proposed works, the commuting and foraging habitat should be taken into consideration in the new design of the site.

5. Recommendations

See table 2 below for a list of the recommendations: -

Table 2 – Mitigation and enhancement recommendations.

Building	Recommendations
Bats/Birds	- Demolition can commence without the requirement of a bat licence. - The treeline to the west of the building, the pond, canal and woodland blocks to the east of the building should be kept as a dark corridor for bats (and other nocturnal species that may be present), by ensuring there is no additional light spill from the new building at night and no new temporary or permanent artificial lighting will be installed.

	- As outlined in the Ecology Wales report, if possible, the building should be demolished between September and February to minimise potential impacts on nesting birds. If this is not possible, a suitably trained ecologist will need undertake a survey of the building to determine if nesting birds are present. <u>Enhancement Measures</u> - Install a bat box, and/or incorporate a bat brick or ridge tile into the design of the new building. - Incorporate a sparrow terrace or swift box in into the design of the new building and/or install a small bird nest box onto the new building.
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References

- Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018) Bats and artificial lighting in the UK; *Bats and the Built Environment* series (Guidance Note 08/18), The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Ecology Wales., ECOLOGICAL INSPECTION OF FOURTEEN LOCKS CANAL CENTRE, PROPOSED FOR DEMOLITION AND NEW BUILD (2025)
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish, A.P. Ed., (2004) 3rd Edition Bat Workers' Manual. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (HMSO).
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HMSO).

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 – Bat Activity Survey Results

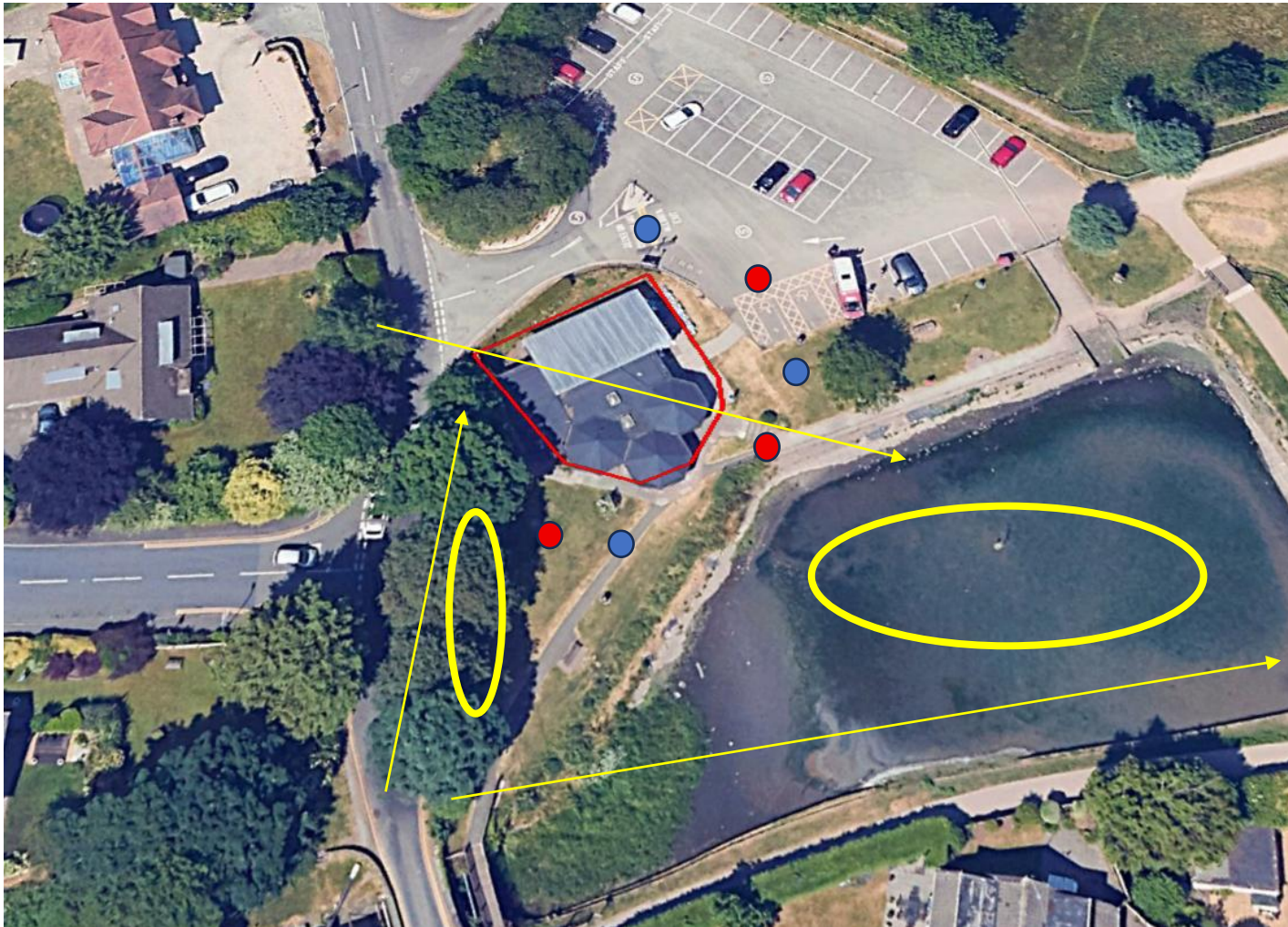


Figure 2 - Results of bat surveys (blue dots = location of surveyors, red dot = location of infrared/thermal cameras, yellow arrows = commuting bats, yellow circle = foraging bats).

Legislation

Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) safeguards species listed under Annex IV Habitats Directive this includes bats, dormice, great crested newts, and otters. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Deliberately disturb a bat
- Damage or destroy a bat roost
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat

Wildlife & Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)

The WCA is the primary legislation for England and Wales to protect fauna and flora conservation, Part I within the Act deals with the protection of wildlife and makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally disturb a bat in a roost
- Intentionally obstruct access to a roost

Environment (Wales) Act 2016

- Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places duty on public authorities to seek to “maintain and enhance biodiversity” as far as it is consistent with proper exercise of their functions. In doing so, public authorities must also seek to “promote the resilience of ecosystems”, ensuring biodiversity is a part of the decision that public authorities take in Wales. This replaces section 40 duty in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 in Wales, and applies to those authorities that fell within the previous duty and the Welsh Ministers will review biodiversity in Wales.

All wild birds, their eggs and nests are protected through the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under these legislations it is an offence to

- kill, injure, or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any such bird whilst it is in use or being built; or
- take or destroying an egg of any such wild bird.