

Bat Surveys

Written by Administrator

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Bat surveys in tropical forests must account for large numbers of species that occur in an extremely complex environment. In contrast bat surveys in the UK rarely record more than three or four sympatric species, and the habitats of British bats are usually buildings and linear features with plant communities composed of just a few species. Canopy heights are low, taxonomic resolution is excellent, and roost availability is highly limited.

Bat surveys in the U.K. are expensive and often based on tenuous evidence. However they are a legal requirement for any development that requires planning permission and their reliability is rarely tested in court. Bats in Glossop, where I was born, have suffered huge declines over the last decades, primarily as a result of housing developments along the flood plain of the Hurst and Glossop Brooks. Shirebrook Park destroyed almost all the hedgerow habitat of Glossop, and riverine vegetation along all water courses in the town are degraded to some extent. In addition severe light pollution makes a lot of potentially good habitat entirely unusable by bats. In this context the granting of developments that destroy bat populations should be strongly opposed using rigorous scientific proof.