
Outbuildings, Coles Farm, Alcombe

Bat Surveys

September 2025, June/July 2026

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Non-Technical Summary

Seasons Ecology was commissioned by WebsterHart, on behalf of the property owner, to undertake dusk emergence bat surveys of two outbuildings at Coles Farm, Alcombe, Box. The surveys were recommended following a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment undertaken in August 2025, which identified evidence of roosting bats within both outbuildings. The surveys were carried out to inform proposed alterations to the outbuildings.

Three dusk emergence surveys were undertaken in September 2025 and June/July 2026 using experienced bat surveyors, bat detectors, infrared cameras and passive acoustic recording equipment. The surveys, together with the findings of the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, confirmed that the outbuildings support roosts used by low numbers of brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe bats. The brown long-eared bat roost is considered to be of Low conservation significance, while the lesser and greater horseshoe bat roosts are considered to be of Moderate conservation significance.

The proposed works will affect confirmed bat roosts and will therefore require a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence from Natural England before works commence. Appropriate mitigation will be required to protect bats during the works and to provide suitable replacement roosting opportunities within the completed development.

A dedicated replacement bat roost is proposed within the small attached section at the north-west end of Outbuilding 1. Given the low numbers of horseshoe bats recorded, this is considered to provide appropriate and proportionate replacement roosting provision for lesser and greater horseshoe bats, as well as brown long-eared bats. The location is immediately adjacent to the existing roosting locations, maintaining continuity of roosting habitat within the existing outbuilding complex, and is positioned away from the proposed swimming pool and associated areas of activity.

The main house at Coles Farm also supports confirmed bat roosts and is subject to separate urgent repair and re-roofing works. The survey findings, evaluation and recommendations relating to the main house are presented within a separate Bat Survey report.

Subject to the works being undertaken in accordance with the European Protected Species Mitigation Licence and the recommendations set out within this report, it is considered that the favourable conservation status of the affected bat populations can be maintained.



Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Survey Method	4

2.2 Dusk Emergence Surveys	4
2.3 Constraints to Surveys	4
2.4 Personnel	5

3. Survey Results	6
--------------------------	----------

4. Evaluation	7
----------------------	----------

4.3 General Bat Activity	7
--------------------------	---

5. Legislation	8
-----------------------	----------

6. Recommendations	9
---------------------------	----------

6.1 European Protected Species Mitigation Licence	9
6.4 Lighting	9

7. Conclusion	10
----------------------	-----------

8. Annexes	12
-------------------	-----------

Annex 1: Survey Locations and Summary of Confirmed Bat Roost Evidence (September 2025 and June/July 2026)	12
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1. Introduction

- 1.1.1 In August 2025, Seasons Ecology was instructed by WebsterHart, on behalf of the property owner, to undertake bat surveys at Coles Farm, Alcombe, Box, SN13 8QL (central grid reference: ST 81116 69196). The surveys were recommended following a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) of the main house and two outbuildings undertaken by Seasons Ecology in August 2025. The outbuildings are proposed for alterations.
- 1.1.2 The purpose of the bat surveys was to provide further information on the confirmed bat roosts identified within the two outbuildings during the PBRA and to determine whether any additional roosts were present. Evidence of roosting bats was identified within both outbuildings.
- 1.1.3 The PBRA described the site with regard to roosting bats as follows:
“The house and outbuildings at Coles Farm lie in a rural location surrounded by open countryside. They have High suitability for roosting bats owing to their ecological context, age, style and construction. Evidence for the presence of roosting bats was identified, including within the main roof space of the house and within both outbuildings.”
- 1.1.4 The main house at Coles Farm was also subject to bat surveys and requires urgent repair and re-roofing works. The survey findings, evaluation and recommendations relating to the main house are presented within a separate Bat Survey report prepared by Seasons Ecology (report ref: SEB3147_02a).
- 1.1.5 This report presents the results of the dusk emergence surveys of **Outbuildings 1 and 2**, evaluates the confirmed bat roosts associated with the buildings and provides recommendations to inform the proposed alterations and associated planning application. It should be read in conjunction with the PBRA report produced by Seasons Ecology (August 2025).

2. Survey Method

- 2.1.1 The survey method is provided below and refers to survey guidelines in BCT (2023)¹.

2.2 Dusk Emergence Surveys

- 2.2.1 A total of three dusk emergence surveys were undertaken of Outbuildings 1 and 2 on **24th September 2025, 10th June 2026 and 1st July 2026**. Surveys commenced approximately 15 minutes before sunset and continued for one and a half hours after sunset.
- 2.2.2 Five surveyors attended each survey of the outbuildings. Each surveyor was equipped with an Echo Meter Touch Pro bat detector connected to an Apple iPad Mini 4, on which all bat activity was recorded.
- 2.2.3 Five infrared night-vision cameras (Sony FDR-AX53 and Canon XA20) were deployed during each survey, one adjacent to each surveyor. Infrared torches and infrared floodlights were positioned to illuminate the elevations of the buildings. Surveyors also used digital night-vision goggles (Nightfox Whisker) where required.

¹ Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists. Good Practice Guidelines*. Bat Conservation Trust. Fourth Edition. Collins.



- 2.2.4 Passive acoustic recording devices (Titley AnaBat Express) were also deployed during each survey. These were positioned adjacent to the surveyors and set to continuous recording mode for the duration of the surveys. Recordings were subsequently analysed using AnalookW (Version 4.2.24) to assist with species identification, with reference to Russ (2012).
- 2.2.5 Following completion of each survey, infrared camera footage was reviewed and passive acoustic recordings analysed to verify observations and assist with species identification.

2.3 Constraints to Surveys

- 2.3.1 There were no constraints to the surveys. All elevations, potential bat access points and identified roost features were visible from the survey positions, and weather conditions were suitable during all surveys.

2.4 Personnel

- 2.4.1 The emergence surveys were overseen by Principal Ecologist and Director, Kate Hayward, who also prepared this report. Kate is a licensed bat ecologist registered to use Class Licence CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2) (Registration No. 2025-84486-CL18-BAT). She has over 25 years' professional ecological experience and is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
- 2.4.2 The emergence surveys were led by Senior Ecologist, Emma Shaw, a licensed bat ecologist registered to use Class Licence CL17 (Bat Survey Level 1), assisted by experienced seasonal bat surveyors.



3. Survey Results

- 3.1.1 The results of the dusk emergence surveys of Outbuildings 1 and 2 are presented below. The locations of the surveyors and a summary of the confirmed bat roost evidence are shown in Annex 1.

3.2 Dusk Emergence Survey, 24th September 2025

- 3.2.1 The survey commenced at 18:48 and finished at 20:33. Sunset was at 19:03. Weather conditions were suitable, with temperatures remaining at 12°C throughout the survey, wind Beaufort 0 (calm), approximately 50% cloud cover and no rainfall.
- 3.2.2 **One lesser horseshoe bat was observed entering Outbuilding 1 via the partially open south-east elevation before emerging again. The bat subsequently warmed up over the lawn to the east of the building, repeatedly re-entering and emerging between 19:50 and 20:04 (47–61 minutes after sunset), before departing southwards over the adjoining boundary wall.**
- 3.2.3 **One lesser horseshoe bat was observed emerging from Outbuilding 2 via the open south-west elevation at 19:58 (55 minutes after sunset). The bat subsequently re-entered and emerged from the building on two further occasions.**
- 3.2.4 General bat activity within the surrounding landscape was moderate and comprised at least seven species: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, *Myotis* species (including probable Natterer's bat), noctule/Leisler's bat, serotine and lesser horseshoe. Common pipistrelle was the most frequently recorded species, accounting for approximately 40% of all bat registrations, followed by noctule/*Leisler's bat*. Activity principally comprised commuting bats together with occasional foraging around the outbuildings and adjacent gardens.

3.3 Dusk Emergence Survey, 10th June 2026

- 3.3.1 The survey commenced at 21:09 and finished at 22:54. Sunset was at 21:24. Weather conditions were suitable, with a start temperature of 13°C reducing to 12°C by the end of the survey, wind Beaufort 0 (calm), approximately 10% cloud cover and no rainfall.
- 3.3.2 **A single lesser horseshoe bat was observed repeatedly re-entering and emerging from Outbuilding 1 via the open doorway on the south-east elevation. Re-entry was recorded at 22:16, 22:24 and 22:42 (52, 60 and 78 minutes after sunset), whilst emergence was recorded at 22:36 and 22:49 (72 and 85 minutes after sunset). No bats were observed using Outbuilding 2 during the survey.**
- 3.3.3 General bat activity within the surrounding landscape was moderate and comprised at least seven species: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, lesser horseshoe, greater horseshoe, brown long-eared bat and Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*. Common pipistrelle was the most frequently recorded species, accounting for approximately half of all bat registrations, followed by noctule. Activity principally comprised commuting bats together with regular foraging around the outbuildings and surrounding landscape.

3.4 Dusk Emergence Survey, 1st July 2026

- 3.4.1 The survey commenced at 21:14 and finished at 22:59. Sunset was at 21:29. Weather conditions were suitable, with a start temperature of 18°C reducing to 17°C by the end of the survey, wind Beaufort 3 (gentle breeze), approximately 10% cloud cover and no rainfall.



- 3.4.2** Outbuilding 1 was used extensively by low numbers of lesser horseshoe bats throughout the survey. Re-entry into the open doorway on the south-east elevation was observed at 22:16, 22:19 and 22:25 (47, 50 and 56 minutes after sunset). Two lesser horseshoe bats were observed emerging from the same doorway at 22:21 (52 minutes after sunset). At 22:29 (60 minutes after sunset), one lesser horseshoe bat was observed re-entering the timber-framed structure on the north-west elevation before emerging again shortly afterwards. A further lesser horseshoe bat was observed emerging from the open doorway on the south-east elevation at 22:29 (60 minutes after sunset).
- 3.4.3** One greater horseshoe bat was observed emerging from the open doorway on the south-east elevation of Outbuilding 1 at 22:28 (59 minutes after sunset).
- 3.4.4** General bat activity within the surrounding landscape was moderate and comprised at least eight species: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, Leisler's bat, lesser horseshoe, greater horseshoe, brown long-eared bat and serotine. Common pipistrelle was the most frequently recorded species, accounting for approximately 47% of all bat registrations, followed by noctule. Activity principally comprised commuting bats together with regular foraging around the outbuildings and surrounding landscape.

4. Evaluation

4.1 Roost Evaluation

- 4.1.1** The PBRA identified confirmed bat roosts within both outbuildings. Approximately 500 bat droppings were recorded within Outbuilding 1, confirmed by DNA analysis as originating from brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* and lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*. A low number of bat droppings were also recorded within Outbuilding 2, confirmed by DNA analysis as lesser horseshoe bat.
- 4.1.2** Three dusk emergence surveys were subsequently undertaken to characterise the use of the outbuildings by roosting bats. Repeated emergence and re-entry behaviour by lesser horseshoe bats was recorded during all three surveys, confirming regular use of Outbuilding 1 and occasional use of Outbuilding 2. During the final survey, one greater horseshoe bat was observed emerging from Outbuilding 1. No brown long-eared bats were observed emerging during any of the surveys. However, the absence of observed emergence does not invalidate the findings of the PBRA, as brown long-eared bats are recognised as being particularly difficult to detect during activity surveys, often emerging late, quietly and under cover, and may not emerge on every survey occasion.
- 4.1.3** The survey evidence therefore indicates that the outbuildings support a number of confirmed bat roosts used by low numbers of bats. Brown long-eared bats are a widespread species and the confirmed day roost within Outbuilding 1 is considered to be of Low conservation significance. Lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe bats are Annex II species, with lesser horseshoe also forming a qualifying feature of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. Although both species are locally common within south-west England, the confirmed roosts are considered to be of Moderate conservation significance.



- 4.1.4 Therefore, the outbuildings support the following bat roosts:

Outbuilding 1

Brown long-eared bat – confirmed day roost supporting low numbers of bats (confirmed by DNA analysis of droppings). **Roost conservation status: Low.**

Lesser horseshoe bat – confirmed night roost supporting low numbers of bats (maximum two bats), with access via the partially open south-east elevation. **Roost conservation status: Moderate.**

Greater horseshoe bat – confirmed day roost supporting low numbers of bats (maximum one bat), with access via the partially open south-east elevation. **Roost conservation status: Moderate.**

Outbuilding 2

Lesser horseshoe bat – confirmed day roost supporting low numbers of bats (one bat), with access via the partially open south-west elevation. **Roost conservation status: Moderate.**

4.2 General Bat Activity

- 4.2.1 Activity surveys recorded a diverse assemblage of bat species across the survey period, demonstrating that the site and surrounding landscape support a range of bat species. Common pipistrelle was consistently the most frequently recorded species, followed by noctule or noctule/Leisler's bat.
- 4.2.2 Bat activity principally comprised commuting and foraging behaviour associated with the gardens, mature trees, boundary vegetation and surrounding countryside. Activity levels were moderate and are consistent with the site's rural setting, which provides a well-connected network of foraging and commuting habitat.
- 4.2.3 The recording of lesser horseshoe, greater horseshoe, brown long-eared and *Myotis* species within the surrounding landscape reflects the high quality of the available habitat and reinforces the importance of maintaining dark commuting corridors and sensitive lighting throughout the site.

5. Legislation

- 5.1.1 Bat species in England and Wales are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to:
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill bats;
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats;
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which bats use for shelter or protection; and,
 - Deliberately damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place.
- 5.1.2 With the exception of disturbance, this legislation applies throughout the year whether bats are present or not at the time of works being carried out and irrespective of planning permission being obtained or being required.



6. Recommendations

6.1 European Protected Species Mitigation Licence

- 6.1.1 Proposed alterations to the Outbuildings 1 and 2 will affect confirmed bat roosts. As bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended), the works will require a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) from Natural England prior to commencement.
- 6.1.2 The licence application shall be supported by an appropriate mitigation strategy and method statement detailing the measures required to avoid harm to bats during the works and to provide suitable replacement roosting opportunities within the completed development.
- 6.1.3 The main house at Coles Farm supports separate confirmed bat roosts and is subject to urgent repair and re-roofing works. The licensing and mitigation requirements associated with those works are considered separately and do not form part of the licensing and mitigation requirements set out within this report.

6.2 Retention and Replacement of Roosting Opportunities

- 6.2.1 The confirmed roosts within Outbuildings 1 and 2 will be affected by the proposed alterations. Suitable replacement roosting provision shall therefore be incorporated within the development under the EPSML.
- 6.2.2 Given the confirmed use of the outbuildings by low numbers of lesser horseshoe bats (**maximum two bats**) and greater horseshoe bats (**maximum one bat**), a dedicated horseshoe bat roost shall be incorporated within the outbuilding complex.
- 6.2.3 It is proposed that the small attached section on the north-west end of Outbuilding 1 is retained and adapted to provide the dedicated replacement roost. This space measures approximately 2.7m x 4.2m, with a height to ridge of approximately 3.5m. Given the low numbers of horseshoe bats recorded, the proposed space is considered to provide an appropriate and proportionate replacement roost and is ideally positioned immediately adjacent to the existing roosting locations, maintaining continuity of roosting habitat within the existing outbuilding complex. Its position at the far end of Outbuilding 1, away from the proposed swimming pool and associated areas of activity, will also minimise potential disturbance and help maintain a suitably quiet and undisturbed roosting environment.
- 6.2.4 The replacement horseshoe bat roost shall be retained as a dark and undisturbed space and shall provide:
 - sufficient internal flight space for horseshoe bats;
 - permanent, unobstructed bat access;
 - stable internal environmental conditions;
 - no artificial lighting internally or at the roost access point; and
 - suitable connectivity to retained dark commuting and foraging habitat within the surrounding site.
- 6.2.5 The internal use and specification of the proposed replacement roost shall be reviewed at detailed design stage to ensure that noise, vibration, heat or other disturbance would not compromise its suitability for roosting bats. If the proposed use of the space is found to be



incompatible with its function as a bat roost, alternative dedicated roost provision shall be required.

- 6.2.6 The dedicated replacement roost shall also provide suitable roosting opportunities for brown long-eared bats, which currently share Outbuilding 1 with horseshoe bats. The internal design and access arrangements shall therefore provide suitable conditions for brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe bats.
- 6.2.7 The precise design, access arrangements and internal specification of the replacement roosting provision shall be agreed as part of the EPSML and implemented in accordance with the approved licence documents.

6.3 Lighting

- 6.3.1 Artificial lighting has the potential to adversely affect roosting and commuting bats by altering their behaviour, delaying emergence, disrupting commuting routes and reducing access to suitable foraging habitat. This is of particular importance for light-sensitive species such as lesser horseshoe, greater horseshoe, brown long-eared and *Myotis* bats, all of which were recorded during the surveys.
- 6.3.2 A sensitive lighting scheme shall therefore be implemented throughout the development to maintain dark conditions around retained and replacement roosts and dark corridors between the buildings and surrounding habitat. External lighting shall be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note 08/23 *Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night*.
- 6.3.3 The following principles shall be incorporated into the lighting design:
- No lighting shall illuminate bat access points, roost entrances or replacement bat roosts.
 - Boundary vegetation, mature trees and known commuting routes shall remain unlit wherever possible.
 - Lighting shall be directed away from retained vegetation and bat flight corridors using appropriate shielding, cowls or hoods.
 - Lighting columns shall be kept to the minimum height necessary.
 - Warm white LED luminaires with a maximum colour temperature of 2700 Kelvin shall be used.
 - Lighting shall be designed to minimise light spill and glare, with luminaires angled only towards the areas requiring illumination.
 - Passive infrared (PIR) sensors, timers and curfews shall be used where appropriate to minimise the duration of illumination.
 - Lighting shall only be provided where essential for health, safety or operational purposes.



7. Conclusion

- 7.1.1 The PBRA, supported by three dusk emergence surveys, has confirmed that Outbuildings 1 and 2 at Coles Farm support a number of bat roosts used by low numbers of bats. These comprise a brown long-eared bat day roost and lesser horseshoe bat night roost within Outbuilding 1, together with a greater horseshoe bat day roost within Outbuilding 1 and a lesser horseshoe bat day roost within Outbuilding 2. The brown long-eared bat roost is considered to be of Low conservation significance, while the lesser and greater horseshoe bat roosts are considered to be of Moderate conservation significance.
- 7.1.2 In addition to the confirmed roosts, the activity surveys recorded a diverse assemblage of bat species commuting and foraging within the site and surrounding landscape, reflecting the high-quality habitat available within this part of Wiltshire and the site's location within the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC Consultation Zone.
- 7.1.3 The proposed alterations to the outbuildings will affect confirmed bat roosts and will therefore require an EPSML from Natural England prior to commencement. The licence will include measures to protect bats during the works and to provide suitable replacement roosting opportunities within the completed development.
- 7.1.4 A dedicated replacement bat roost is proposed within the small attached section at the north-west end of Outbuilding 1. Given the low numbers of horseshoe bats recorded, the proposed space is considered to provide appropriate and proportionate replacement roosting provision for lesser and greater horseshoe bats, as well as brown long-eared bats. Its location immediately adjacent to the existing roosting locations will maintain continuity of roosting habitat within the existing outbuilding complex, while its position away from the proposed swimming pool and associated areas of activity will help maintain a suitably quiet and undisturbed roosting environment.
- 7.1.5 The main house at Coles Farm also supports confirmed bat roosts and is subject to separate urgent repair and re-roofing works. The survey findings, evaluation, mitigation and licensing requirements associated with the main house are presented within a separate Bat Survey report prepared by Seasons Ecology (report ref: SEB3147_02a).
- 7.1.6 Subject to the works being undertaken in accordance with the EPSML and the recommendations set out within this report, including provision of the dedicated replacement roost and maintenance of suitable dark conditions around the roost and associated commuting habitat, it is considered that the favourable conservation status of the affected bat populations can be maintained and that the proposed works can proceed in accordance with current wildlife legislation and national planning policy.



8. Annexes

Annex 1: Outbuildings Survey Locations and Summary of Confirmed Bat Roost Evidence (September 2025 and June/July 2026)



Key	
	Survey buildings
	Surveyor position
	Camera position
	Brown long-eared bat droppings (DNA confirmed)
	<u>Emergence/Re-entry Observations</u>
1.	Two lesser horseshoe re-entry and emergence
2.	One lesser horseshoe emergence
3.	One greater horseshoe emergence

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