

Cover Letter

AIDAN MURPHY - APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF BAT SURVEY LICENCE,
(NPWS Survey Licence No.: **DER/BAT 2025-206**, expiry date: 31st December 2025).

BACKGROUND

I am an independent freelance ecologist with 10 years' experience in general ecological consultancy and became involved with bat surveying from 2020 onwards and I expect to continue with bat surveys with the new survey season starting in May 2026.

I began working on bat surveys assisting bat ecologist Seán Meehan from August 2020 to September 2021. From 2022 to 2025 I have undertaken bat surveys on behalf of several ecological consultancies, architects and private commissions. Bat records for 2024 and 2025 have been submitted to NPWS.

I wish to apply for renewal of last year's survey licence to continue with bat surveys in 2026.

If you require any further information for this application for licence renewal, please let me know.

Kind regards,

Aidan Murphy BSc (Hons), MSc.



Signed

15/April/2026

Date

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

AIDAN MURPHY-APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF BAT SURVEY LICENCE. DER/BAT 2025-206

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2. Introduction

- a. The purpose of this application is to obtain a derogation licence to undertake bat surveys, including inspection of potential roost structures and legally protected roost sites. This is to support ecological assessment and ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts and Habitats Directive. Activities are limited to non-invasive survey methods and visual inspections.

- b. **Name:** Aidan Murphy.

Education/ qualifications:

M.Sc. in Ecological Assessment, University College Cork, Cork. 2015

BSc. (Hons) Wildlife Biology, Munster Technological University (MTU). 2012.

Experience

I am an independent freelance ecologist with ten years' experience in general ecological consultancy and have been undertaking bat surveys since 2020.

Courses relevant to bat surveying:

- *Bats: Identification and Survey*
A four-day module as part of MSc in Ecological Assessment (UCC) 2015 with bat ecologist Colin Kelleher.
MSc thesis on 'Ecology of Leixlip Spa, County Kildare' which included survey of bat diversity; survey with assistance from Seán Meehan.
- *Bat Impacts and Mitigation - 13th June 2023 (CIEEM)*
One day course at Crom Estate, Co. Fermanagh with Dr. Emma Boston.
- *Bat Identification & Handling Training Course (BCI)*
Three-day course: Fri 11 Aug 2023 - Sun 13 Aug 2023
Venue: Agricultural Show Grounds, Virginia, Co. Cavan, with Dr. Niamh Roche and Dr. Tina Aughney.

- c. I am the sole applicant, no other surveyors or trainees involved or to be included in licence application.

3. Full Details of Proposed Activity

The proposed activity involves surveying buildings and/or trees to assess potential and existing bat roosts at national level. The purpose is to provide data to inform planning and conservation management decisions.

4. Ecological Survey and Site Assessment

This derogation application applies to bat surveys with locations as yet unknown.

5. Ecological Survey and Site Assessment

N/A. As above, this derogation application applies to bat surveys with locations as yet unknown

6. Evidence to Support the Derogation Tests

Test 1. Reason for Derogation

Entry to a structure with a known roost, such as an attic or shed may be necessary to verify occupancy, identify additional signs of roosting, and deploy a static detector. However, this access can only be carried out with an appropriate derogation licence. Old stone bridges, mature trees, and derelict buildings often require the use of endoscopes, a technique permitted only under licence. These survey methods are employed to determine the location, occupancy, population size, and likely species of bats. The resulting data guide the development of protective measures for bat conservation. However, any actions that might disturb bats will be undertaken only when absolutely necessary to inform mitigation strategies, and any resulting disturbance will be minimized to the lowest possible level.

Test 2. Absence of Alternative Solutions

There is no suitable alternative to undertaking the work without the approval of an appropriate survey licence, as relying solely on external survey methods, such as emergence surveys with night vision aids (NVAs) and external structure examinations would constitute inadequate survey effort. This approach could result in poorly designed protective measures and, ultimately, the possibility of harming bats.

The 'do nothing option' is not an option. Incomplete surveys would result in insufficient baseline data, increasing the risk of negative impacts on bats and potential breaches of wildlife legislation.

Test 3. Impact of Derogation on Conservation Status

The proposed activities are strictly limited to non-invasive bat surveys and will not in themselves result in habitat loss, roost destruction, or long-term displacement. At both local and national scales, the proposed surveys are not expected to influence population trends.

Potential impacts are confined to minor, short-term disturbances, such as brief activity at roost access points or the temporary presence of the licensed surveyor. These effects are localized, immediately reversible, and of negligible magnitude. To ensure this, all works will adhere in strict accordance with the necessary guidelines i.e., NPWS Guidance Series (2021), (Collins, 2023; 4th edition) and Marnell *et al.* (2022). Surveys to be conducted by the licensed ecologist during non-sensitive periods, avoiding, as far as possible, key sensitive times such as maternity and hibernation seasons.

Given that sensitive survey methods will be employed, alongside standard mitigation measures, the proposed surveys will not adversely affect the conservation status of any bat species, nor hinder the maintenance of populations at a Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) within their natural range.

7. Monitoring the Impacts of the Derogations

The proposed derogation is sought exclusively for bat survey activities. Compliance will be ensured through strict adherence to established methodologies, e.g. Collins (2023; 4th edition) best practice guidelines, with all fieldwork executed by the licensed ecologist. Comprehensive records of survey methods, environmental conditions, and any instances of minor disturbance will be maintained.

It is preferable that a licensed surveyor undertakes the initial surveys and, should a roost be recorded, continues with monitoring and overseeing the implementation of mitigation measures. This continuity ensures that site-specific knowledge gained during the initial surveys is retained throughout the process, allowing for more informed decision-making, accurate interpretation of bat activity and roost use, and the effective, timely implementation of mitigation measures. Overall, this approach provides the best outcome for bats by reducing the risk of oversight, ensuring consistency in methodology, and maximising the effectiveness of mitigation and monitoring.

Many surveys are undertaken at the initial stage of projects where development may be proposed at a later date on sites containing legally protected bat roosts. In most cases, I will continue as the project ecologist, undertaking updated surveys if planning permission is sought. Where another team assumes oversight, the existing reports will inform subsequent assessments and form part of a continuous body of information guiding the development and ensuring the protection of bats. Given the non-invasive, temporary nature of these activities, no significant impacts are anticipated; consequently, formal long-term monitoring is not considered necessary. Nonetheless, all findings, including roost locations, species composition, and activity levels, will be documented to inform future assessments.

Since late spring 2024, bat emergence surveys have incorporated the use of night vision aids (NVAs), including thermal imaging and infra-red cameras, in accordance with current best practice guidance. Video footage and ultrasonic recordings are retained as a permanent record to enable verification of survey findings and to support any subsequent review or analysis.

Aidan Murphy BSc (Hons), MSc.



Signed

15/April/2026

Date