

Site Name: Moore Hall (Lough Carra) SAC

Site Code: 000527

This site consists of a series of buildings within 1 km of the eastern shore of Lough Carra, Co. Mayo. The buildings are used at various times throughout the year by the Lesser Horseshoe Bat.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

[1303] Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>)

There are three distinct areas used by the bats at this site: a two-storey former dwelling which is used as a summer breeding site; a series of cellars and adjoining underground passage which are used as winter hibernation sites; and an underground passage in a small stone building. All three locations are attached to, or in the grounds of, the ruin of Moore Hall. The bats have uninterrupted access to all sites. In 1992, repair work was undertaken on the roof of the breeding site and grilles fitted to the cellars and adjoining passage. Protective grilles were fitted again to the cellar access in 2006. The surrounding wood and lake edge provide ideal foraging habitat for the bats throughout the year.

In July 1995, more than 200 Lesser Horseshoe Bats were recorded at this site and more than 100 were counted in winter 1995/96. There was a decline in numbers to a low of 36 in June 2009 due to deterioration of the Coach House roof. Refurbishment to the Coach House reversed this decline and numbers of bats increased to 128 in June 2010. Numbers in the winter roost declined from 576 in January 2009 to 88 in January 2010, possibly due to severe weather conditions during winter 2010. The site remains of international importance and is notable as one of the most northerly locations for the Lesser Horseshoe Bat in Ireland.

Any commercial felling of timber near the site would have a negative impact on the bats. There is intermittent vandalism at the breeding site, but this does not affect the bats and it is monitored carefully. There is no disturbance at the hibernation site.