



**Site Name: Ballinafad SAC**

**Site Code: 002081**

This site is located approximately 10 km south-west of Castlebar in Co. Mayo. It is a breeding site for the Lesser Horseshoe Bat, and consists of a large building which was formerly used as an agricultural college. The bats use the roof space which they access through roof hatches.

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> )
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In September 1998, 40 bats were counted at this site. The small population size recorded here is probably attributable to the fact that this is the most northerly site known for the species in Ireland, and hence Europe, rather than to any deficiency in the roosting site.

The building is occupied, but only certain sectors of it are currently in use and maintained.

The surrounding woodland provides suitable foraging habitat within a small radius of the day roost site, a feature which is of paramount importance to this species because it avoids flying across open spaces.

Although the number of bats at this site is relatively low, the site is important as it is the most northerly point in Europe where this species is known to occur.