

**Site Name: Newhall and Edenvale Complex SAC**

**Site Code: 002091**

Newhall and Edenvale Complex SAC is situated approximately 4 km south of Ennis in Co. Clare. It consists of three distinct locations which 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):

[8310] Caves

[1303] Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*)

Newhall and Edenvale Caves are natural fossil limestone caves. Newhall is a narrow, dry passage formed along an inclined joint. The main passage of Edenvale Cave runs into a cliff for 15 m and is crossed by a number of other passages. The side passages run in two directions at acute angles to each other, forming many intersections, hence the local name "The Catacombs". The two caves are used as winter hibernation sites by the bats, while a two-storey farm out-building is used as a breeding site. Two of the locations, Newhall Cave and the farm building, are in the grounds of Newhall House, and the second cave, Edenvale Cave, is in the grounds of Edenvale House, within 1 km of Newhall House. The bats have uninterrupted access to all sites. In 1983 grilles were fitted to both caves.

The surrounding areas of mature mixed woodland, parkland and lakes provide ideal foraging habitat and shelter for the bats throughout the year and are included within the site.

Bats have been recorded at this site since 1983 and the population is estimated at more than 500 individuals. The site is of international importance for Lesser Horseshoe Bat, and ranks as one of the most important sites in Europe for the species.