



# MANX BAT GROUP

Yn possan Ellan Vannin son craitnagyn

Registered Charity No 443

## NEWS

### Lesser horseshoe bat found in the Isle of Man

The Manx Bat Group is very excited to announce that it has recently recorded the presence of lesser horseshoe bats in the island. This species is not one of those previously known to be resident and this discovery brings the total number of bat species recorded for the Isle of Man to nine.

The identity of the species was confirmed by DNA analysis of bat droppings retrieved from the cellar of a house located in the south of the island. There were no bats present at the time, so it is not currently known how many bats roost at the site.

There is an earlier bat group record dating from November 2006 and published in *Peregrine*, vol 10 (2), when a member of the public reported a grounded bat which from its description is thought to have been lesser horseshoe. That bat flew away before its identity could be corroborated by the bat group. Both records involve sites in the south of the island, approximately 2 miles apart.

The lesser horseshoe bat, *Rhinolophus hipposideros* is one of Britain's smallest bats, weighing between 4 to 9 grams. In the late nineteenth century it was common as far north as Yorkshire but has not been recorded there since 1944. Numbers declined drastically during the last century although in recent decades there has been some evidence of recovery. Today its British Isles range is restricted to Wales, the southwest counties of England and the western counties of Ireland.

The discovery was made during a monitoring visit to a location previously known as a roost site for other bat species. Roost monitoring together with a new citizen science activity monitoring project, Bat Search launched in 2019, forms a large part of the Manx Bat Group's enhanced programme for studying the



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Island's bat populations. This programme is supported by a generous grant from the Manx Lottery Trust Community Fund which has enabled the bat group to purchase some specialist ultrasound detectors which a team of volunteers has been using last summer. Some bat roosting boxes have also been purchased using the grant and these will be deployed in 2020.

Kevin Wells, Chair of the Manx Bat Group said "This is extremely exciting news! This is the second new species recorded in as many years and just shows how important projects such as Bat Search and our roost monitoring are. We are really grateful to The Manx Lottery Trust Community Fund for their grant. This has allowed us to purchase the new equipment that has allowed our group to discover more about some of Manx Wildlife's most interesting species".

The group will be carrying out further fieldwork in the coming season and beyond to find out more. We need volunteers to join our monitoring activities this summer. If you would like to be part of this exciting activity and to know more, whether it is walking routes at night to record bats as part of Bat Search, counting bats as they leave their roosts, or perhaps working with bat boxes then we would love to hear from you.

You can get in touch via Facebook, our website [www.manxbatgroup.org.im](http://www.manxbatgroup.org.im) or via the helpline, 366177

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