JUSTIFICATION FOR THE USE OF A 10KM BUFFER AROUND T HE USK BAT SITES SAC.

Introduction

The Usk ValleTy o(L T*[(T)0.640e05(42(7(A))eo*)-7.22949-30.1655a)-(y)6555(V)1.57442(c.294974

arily for the lesser horseshoe bat –an annex II species feature,
qualifying features, namely European Dry Heaths, Degraded
al regeneration, Blanket bogs, Calcareous rocky slopes with
not open to the public, and Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes,

Usk Bat Sites SAC lation populations are known to use northern parts
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Lesser Horseshoe Bat Ecology

During the summer, lesser horseshoe bats form maternity colonies, generally in undisturbed areas of old rural buildings, and forage in mixed deciduous woodland, woodland edges, scrub, hedgerows and treelines. Associated pasture and watercourses can be an important source of the prey items, although foraging flights away from woodland cover appear limited. Such mixed land-use, especially on south-facing slopes, favours the moths and other insects on which the bats feed. In winter they depend on caves, abandoned mines and other underground sites - including cellars and ice-houses of old manor houses - for undisturbed hibernation. Bats will emerge to forage during winter in mild conditions (above 6°C). A series of other roost sites will also be used by a population, including some only for night roosting during foraging.

Current knowledge on population range is incomplete, relying on a limited number of radio tracking studies from summer sites and evidence of roost linkage from ringing studies. Studies have shown most foraging to be within 2 - 3 Km of the maternity roost, but with areas at greater distances, typically 4-5 Km, being used. The quality and concentration of suitable foraging habitat will affect foraging distances as does the availability of suitable night roosts. Where habitats are fragmented, linear features such as hedgerows form important corridors between roosts and foraging areas.

- Avoid loss, damage and fragmentation (including that arising from inappropriate lighting) to foraging areas used by bats e.g. woodland, scrub, hedgerows, pasture and tree lines along field boundaries as these areas support prey and provide 'perch' sites and travel routes for the bats.
- Where a plan or development proposal cannot avoid loss of foraging habitats consideration should be given to the enhancement of retained foraging habitat in the surrounding area. This should be based on an understanding of the distribution and ecological requirements of the species.
- Ensure best practice in drawing up mitigation plans for plans/proposals affecting lesser horseshoe bats and compliance with relevant legislation.

To comply with Regulations 61 and 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the impact of a plan or project proposal will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, using guidelines developed between the local planning authority (LPA) and CCW on the likely impacts of particular policiesT2170.g436(a)]TJ 249.383.74(r)2.80561bbonTd [(i)-2.1655-0.29554