



Farmland Creatures: Bats



National Rural Network

Bats play an important and useful role in our ecosystem. Mounting bat boxes is a key measure under GLAS to help maintain and encourage the Bat population in Ireland

Pipistrelles, brown long-eared bat are common to Ireland, the Lesser horseshoe bat is present but occurrence is rare.

These flying mammals don't make nests, instead they live in buildings and trees, roosting in crevices or gaps. Bat numbers are in decline due to a fall in the number of insects and a loss of roosting sites.

Bats are very beneficial to humans and livestock. A single bat can consume 3,000 midges in one night, reducing the need for pesticides.



Image: Pipistrelle Bat Source: Mnolf Wikimedia, CC-BY-SA-3.0

Bats boxes are used by Bats all year round

16,000 Farmers chose the Bat boxes option under GLAS. In order for the bat boxes to become an attractive roosting site for bats, they must be placed in areas where bats feed. Bats particularly favour hedgerows and tree lines as navigation routes and feeding sites. Bats have to fall from there roosts therefore boxes need to go on a tree with no underlying branches.



Image: NRN

Bat boxes can be made from untreated timber. They should be placed on trees or buildings with a south-facing aspect. Place them at least four metres from the ground, away from predators and vandals. Place them where there will be sunlight, but little wind. The box entrance needs to be very small approx. 15-18mm to avoid predators or birds habituating the box.