

In this part of the country there are usually only seven species of Bats found using buildings as roost sites. The three most common of these species are the Pipistrelle, the Brown Long Eared and the Natterer's Bat.

These bats usually mate Sept/Oct. and then leave their summer roost site to find somewhere suitable for the winter.

Once mated the male's sperm is stored inside the female's body until climatic conditions trigger its use the following springtime.

The gestation period is from six to nine weeks and results in a single offspring being born sometime between the end of June and early July.

Young bats quickly develop after being born blind and hairless. After three or four days their eyes open and by about three weeks they are able to fly. However, they continue to suckle until they are six or seven weeks old.

These small bats work very hard during the hours of darkness. They usually emerge from their roost about twenty minutes after sunset and a single bat can catch up to three and a half thousand small midge type flies in a single night.

Once bats have selected a suitable breeding/roost site they will return to it year after year and can live for over twenty-five years.

Bats have no need to make a nest as they either just hang- on to suitable structures or simply congregate in small void areas.

Bats are not rodents and have no need to keep their teeth worn down by constant gnawing so they do not damage the fabric of the buildings they are using.

Their droppings, although resembling those of small mouse droppings, do not carry with them the same health risks or pungent smell. Bat droppings are very dry and crumbly to the touch unlike the moister mouse droppings.

Bats do not only roost in very old buildings, they can be found in modern properties usually roosting behind fascia boards and cladding. Sometimes the first indication of this can be the discovery of small droppings on first floor windowsills.

If an injured Bat is found an experienced person can sometimes nurse it back to health and then release it back into the same area it was originally found.

More information can be obtained by contacting:

- Joyce Gillis (Preston) Telephone 01772 335605 who is licensed to handle bats in summer and care for injured ones
- North West Bat Help line Tel. 01704 385735
- The Bat Conservation Trust. Tel. 0845 1300228