

**Survey for Bats, Barn Owls & Breeding Birds,  
Beckside Farm, Distington, Cumbria, CA14 4QY.**



View of the house from the southwest

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**Report commissioned by:**  
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## Contents

### Introduction

A1	Bats and their requirements . Bat Year.	3
A2	Barn owls and their requirements. Owl Year.	4
A3	Breeding birds	4
B1	Background to activity	4

### Survey and site assessment

C1	Pre-existing information on species on site	4
C2	Status of species in the local/regional area	5-6
C3	Object of survey	6
C4	Survey area	6
C5	Habitat description	6
C6	Field survey:	6
C6.1	Methods	6
C6.2	Timing	7
C6.3	Weather Conditions	7
C6.4	Personnel	7
C7	Results	7
C8	Interpretation and evaluation	7
C8.1	Presence/Absence	7
C8.2	Population size class assessment	7
C8.3	Site status assessment	7
C9	Map of survey area	7-8

### Impact assessment

D1	Pre-and mid- activity impacts	8
D2	Long-term impacts	8
D3	Post activity interference impacts	8
D4	Other impacts	8
D5	Summary of the impacts at site level	8
D6	Summary of impacts in a wider context	8

### Mitigation

E1	Mitigation strategy	8
E2	Replacement roost site selection	8
E2.1	Existing species status	8
E2.2	Location, ownership and status	8
E3	Habitat creation, restoration and/or enhancement	8-9
E4	Capture and exclusion	9
E4.1	Timing, effort, methods, capture/exclusion methods	9
E5	Post development safeguard	9
E5.1	Habitat management and safeguard	9
E5.2	Population monitoring	9

### Summary

F1	Summary of development, mitigation, Bat & Owl Year, Ref. Photo's.	9 10-11
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Species	Local Status	Habitat
<b>Noctule</b> <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Widespread but uncommon, mobile populations, breeding roosts recorded.	Tree dweller; predominantly in lowlands. Occupies woodpecker & rot holes. Seldom in buildings. Will utilise bat boxes. Feeds over deciduous woodland, parkland, pasture, water & forest edges.
<b>Daubenton's bat</b> <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Widespread; hibernacula & breeding roosts recorded	Bridges, tunnels, caves, mines, stone buildings & trees. Has been found hibernating underground at high altitude (550m). Feeds over rivers, canals & other water bodies. Will forage in riparian woodland.
<b>Natterer's bat</b> <i>Myotis nattereri</i>	Widespread; hibernacula & breeding roosts recorded. Less common than Daubenton's.	Similar to Daubenton's & can be found together; bridges, old buildings, barns, trees & underground sites. Feeds in woodland & parkland. Has recently been recorded in some upland areas, mainly using riparian habitats.
<b>Whiskered bat</b> <i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	Widespread but uncommon; breeding roosts & hibernacula recorded	Older, mainly stone buildings, old churches, trees & often in bat boxes. Feeds mainly in deciduous woodland.
<b>Brandt's bat</b> <i>Myotis brandtii</i>	Widespread but uncommon; breeding roosts & hibernacula recorded. 'Swarming' sites recorded.	Similar to Whiskered.
<b>Brown Long-eared bat</b> <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Widespread; hibernacula & breeding roosts recorded	Old buildings, churches, barns (often with trees close by), underground sites & trees. Often found in bat boxes. Feeds in deciduous & coniferous woodland often within the canopy, around parkland trees, gardens, along hedgerows
<b>Common Pipistrelle</b> <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> (45kHz)	Widespread & common; breeding roosts recorded but species recognition only recently recorded.	Wide age range of buildings; favours modern structures, trees occasionally & bat boxes. Feeds over diverse habitat; rural & urban gardens, woodland, farmland or near water. Found hibernating behind wooden cladding on buildings, in soffits, behind fascia boarding & in gaps in wooden window frames, also hibernates in
<b>Soprano Pipistrelle</b> <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> (55kHz)	Widespread and common; breeding roosts recorded but species recognition only recently recorded	As Common Pipistrelle. Favours riparian habitat & roosts in larger maternity colonies than the Common Pipistrelle. Found hibernating behind wooden cladding on buildings, in soffits, behind fascia boarding & in gaps in wooden window frames, also hibernates in
<b>Nathusius Pipistrelle</b> <i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	Rare. Three UK breeding sites known. A single bat detector record of a night roost in Cumbria and several foraging records.	Tree dweller, hollow trees, cracks, bat boxes & buildings. Sometimes shares nursery roost with Pipistrelle or Brandt's bats. Feeds mainly around riparian & woodland edge habitats.
<b>Leisler's bat</b> <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Rare. Unconfirmed bat detector record in Cumbria. Present in adjacent counties (Yorkshire & Dumfries & Galloway)	Woodland bat, similar to Noctule but will roost in buildings. Feeds in open deciduous and coniferous woodland, over water bodies, parkland and around street lamps in suburban areas.

<b>Alcathoe's bat</b> <i>Myotis alcathoe</i>	Rare. Unconfirmed bat detector record for Cumbria. Present in adjacent county (Yorkshire)	Woodland bat, similar to Whiskered. Feeds in mature deciduous woodland with streams. Often uses dead/decaying trees for roosting.
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(adapted from the Cumbrian Wildlife Trust BAP report)

The Cumbrian Mammals atlas compiled by Tullie House Museum which records reported sightings of bats (the majority being from populated areas) no bats are reported in this Tetrad NY0022(4km square); while Pipistrelle bats are found in adjoining tetrads and Brown Long Eared, Daubenton & Natterer's bats within 6km.

*Tyto alba* (barn owl) is considered widespread but scarce. The Breeding Birds for Cumbria Atlas 2007-2012, indicates the species breeding in this Tetrad.

### C3 Objective of Survey

The objective of survey was to ascertain whether there were any signs of use of the site by bats, barn owls and other breeding birds.

Signs of bats include droppings, insect remains, wear marks on beams, egress points smoothed by continuous use, or the presence of bats. Areas that have potential for bats to roost in, but no actual signs of bats or inaccessible area's to survey are also noted.

Signs of owls include :- pellets, faeces remains ('whitewash'), feathers, dead chicks, prey remains or the presence of owls.

Signs of breeding birds :- bird activity, nest material and eggs/chicks, feathers and faeces.

### C4 Survey area

The survey area was the barn and stores both internally and the externally, the detached property was also observed.

### C5 Habitat description

Beckside Farm is at Grid Ref. NY010237 and is 300m east of Distington village which is 4km to the south of Workington, it sits 2km west of the Solway Coast an Area of Outstanding National Beauty. Distington beck is 10m to the north it flows southwest into the Lowca Beck, both have mainly deciduous tree margins. The house and barn sits adjoining an agricultural area with drystone wall, hedge and fenced field boundaries and interspersed mature trees, Moresby Moss lies 4km to the south.

#### Site description

The barn and stores are attached to the east of the farmhouse the roof is Westmorland slate with a stone ridge on battens, felt, rafters, purlin & truss, parged below, walls are mortared local stone & brick part rendered and part plasterd & whitewashed. The barn has stores below and lean-to stores to he west & east, ground floors are concrete, upper floor boards on joists. A lean-to UPVC glazed porch is to the south. A separate detached barn lies to the north east.

### C6 Field survey

#### C6.1 Methods:

The building was surveyed on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017, with a high-powered torch and ladder. Areas that had potential for bats, owls or other birds but were inaccessible were noted. 6

**C6.2 Timing-** emergence/activity surveys was not carried out it being outside the bats active period.

**C6.3 Weather conditions-** temperature was 12degC with 100% cloud cover, with light showers and southwest breeze.

**C6.4 Personnel-** survey was conducted by Steve Wake.

#### C7 Results:-

Signs of a Barn Owl roosting were found in the upper loft of the detached barn with a minor roost in the main barn, no sign of bats were found within the main house roof, attached barn or detached barn, old barn swallow nest were observed on roof & ceiling timbers..

### **Potential**

No signs of bats were found inside the barn or stores, there is also potential for them to roost:-

Under the slates & flashings if access gaps are present.

In joints or between gaps in roof timbers.

In gaps in walls and lintels or around window/door openings

There is opportunity or smaller birds to nest around the buildings and Barn Owls to roost in northeast barn.

## **C8 Interpretation and evaluation**

### **C8.1 Presence/Absence:**

There were signs to indicate the presence of a barn owl roosting in the detached barn with a minor roost in the main barn, Nest building by barn swallows were evident. No evidence of bats were seen inside the building but being close to the beck are likely to feed around the building, no large bat roosts were evident.

**C8.2 Population size class assessment:** Small numbers of Common Pipistrelle bats are likely with a roosting Barn Owl.

### **C8.3 Site status assessment:**

In their present condition the barns have a medium status for local bat, barn owl & other bird population.

## **C9 Map of survey area**

### **Overhead Site View**





### Impact assessment

- D1 Pre- and mid- activity impacts:** None anticipated.
- D2 Long-term impacts:** None anticipated.
- D3 Post activity interference impacts:** None anticipated
- D4 Other impacts:** External lighting should be low level and output to protect bat and Barn Owl feeding areas.
- D5 Summary of impacts at the site level:**  
None, if there are no bats or nesting birds present at the time of works.
- D6 Summary of impacts in a wider context:** none

### Mitigation

- E1 Mitigation strategy:** An Owl box is recommended for the detached barn. Two Bat boxes to be placed on north walls for bat relocating any bats found during works. An activity survey is recommended in Spring 2018 to confirm no bat activity present.
- E2 Replacement roost site selection:** Not anticipated.
- E2.1 Existing species status:** Locally Pipistrelle bats are common and widespread, Barn Owls are widespread but scarce.
- E2.2 Location, ownership and status:** Beckside Farm is at Grid Ref. NY010237 and is 300m east of Distington village which is 4km to the south of Workington, it sits 2km west of the Solway Coast an Area of Outstanding National Beauty. Distington beck is 10m to the north it flows southwest into the Lowca Beck. The property is owned by Mr & Mrs Watson.
- E3 Habitat creation, restoration and/or enhancement:**  
Bat roosts can be created by:-  
Erecting bat boxes around the site.  
Habitat can be enhanced by encouraging insect life and:  
Planting and maintaining broad-leaved native tree species.  
Planting night-flowering species such as honeysuckle.  
Planting native flowering species such as dog rose.  
Any external lighting to be low level and output so as not to disturb bat feeding areas.

- E3.1 Terrestrial habitats:** Farm dwelling, garden and farm buildings.

**E4.1 Timing , effort, methods, capture/exclusion methods:** See Bat year for roof work.

**E5 Post development safeguard.** None.

**E5.1 Habitat management and safeguard:** the site is located in a rural area with no immediate threat to the surrounding habitat.

**E5.2 Population monitoring:** N/A

**E5.3 Mechanism for ensuring delivery:** work to be carried out in 2018, any sign of bat or Barn Owl activity in the building during works should be notified immediately!

**F1 Summary of development and mitigation:**

The buildings had signs of a barn owl roosting, no evidence of a large bat roost was found, a bat activity survey prior to start of work is recommended to confirm no activity.

There is potential for bats to be present in the areas that were inaccessible to the survey. These were, under any gaps in roof junctions and under slates and flashings and behind roof beams & in wall gaps.

Extreme care must be taken when working on these areas and on the roof. Crevices should be checked with a torch prior to pointing to ensure no bats are entombed.

Two bat boxes will be placed on site on the north wall to temporary house any bats found during the works. A Barn Owl has been roosting in the northeast barn a box could be provided to encourage nesting, any owl work should be supervised by an Barn Owl ecologist.

Bats can be encouraged on site by allowing them access to the building post-works, and by erecting bat boxes.

If at any point during the works bats or barn owls or other nesting birds are seen or suspected within the building, work must stop and further advice sought.

A European Protective Species Licence will not be required provided all requirements of this report are adhered to.

**References**

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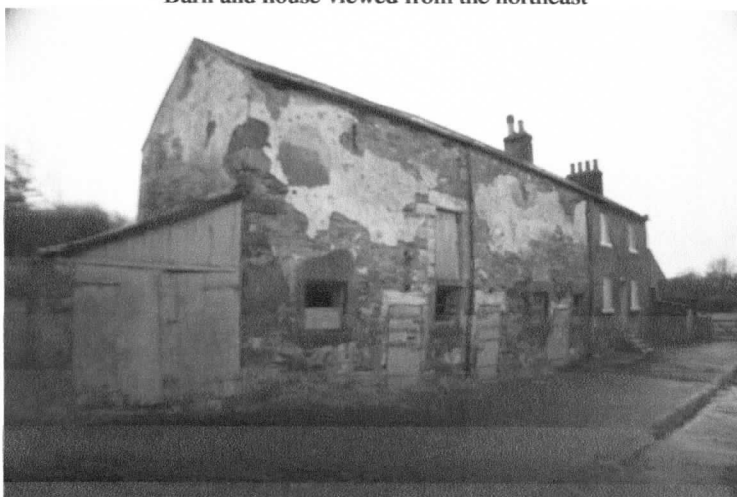
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The Barn Owl Trust



Barn and house viewed from the northeast



Distington beck, detached barn and attached barn looking east

