

RISK ASSESSMENT



Location	Various: Devon-wide
Activity	Participating in Devon Bat Survey 2025 (May-October)
Risk Assessment Prepared by	Lindsay Mahon
Date of Assessment	31 March 2025

EMERGENCY INFORMATION			
Post code: Click here	N/A	Grid Reference: Click here	N/A
What Three Words identification: Click here	N/A		
Nearest Hospital: Click here	Torbay Hospital (24 hour A&E): Lowes Bridge, Torquay, Devon, TQ2 7AA 01803 614567 Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital (24 hour A&E): Barrack Rd, Exeter, EX2 5DW. Tel: 01392 411611 North Devon District Hospital (24 hour A&E): Raleigh Park, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 4JB 01271 322577 Musgrove Park Hospital (24 hour A&E): Parkfield Drive, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 5DA 01823 333444		
Description of how to find vehicle access points	N/A. Bat survey participants will be choosing their own locations across the county of Devon. Most will survey on their own land/private gardens		

Likelihood		Severity	
1	Extremely unlikely to occur (<10% chance)	1	Minor injury not requiring first aid
2	Unlikely to occur	2	Minor injury that will require first aid
3	Reasonable chance of occurring (50% chance)	3	Moderate injury – absence for more than 3 days but less than 7
4	Likely to occur	4	Major injury – absence for more than 7 days
5	Extremely likely to occur (>90%)	5	Serious disabling injury or fatality

RESIDUAL RISK KEY (Residual risk = Likelihood x Severity)		
1 - 5	Low	Residual risk is adequately managed
6-10	Medium	Residual risk is acceptable but controls should be considered to see if it can be reduced to “low” rating
11-19	High	Residual risk is high and additional controls must be introduced to reduce to at least “medium” rating
21-25	Intolerable	Residual risk is unacceptable and activity must not proceed

Hazard <i>What could cause harm?</i>	Who could be harmed? <i>Who is at risk?</i>	Potential for harm? <i>How could harm occur and what could that harm be?</i>	Current controls? <i>What are we doing already to make it safe?</i>	Could it be made safer? <i>If so, detail how (leave blank if not appropriate)</i>	Residual Risk <i>Level of risk that remains after controls</i>		
					L	S	RR
Traffic	Citizen Scientist	Road traffic accident while driving or hit by a vehicle when on foot in a car park or on a road. Could result in serious injury or death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Citizen Scientists volunteering to take part in the Devon Bat Survey are responsible for collecting and returning a bat detector to the host centre closest or most convenient for them. How they travel to and from the host centres is a matter of choice and availability. If driving, all usual vigilance and adherence to the Highway Code must be applied. Park sensibly and legally within marked parking bays, or otherwise with consideration for other road users and pedestrians. When on foot crossing roads or car parking areas, remain alert for moving traffic and only cross when safe to do so. 		2	5	10

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Contaminated equipment	Citizen Scientist/host centre staff	Covid-19 transmission through contact with contaminated equipment, leading to illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no government guidelines in place in relation to Covid-19. If you are concerned about potentially picking up the virus from bat detector kit that has been handled by others, then sanitize or wash your hands thoroughly after being in contact with the bat detector kit. Do not touch your face, or other items until you have washed your hands. 		1	4	4
Uneven or muddy/slippery ground	Citizen Scientist	Slips, trips, or falls could result in bruises, cuts, sprains or at worst, broken bones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When selecting the site for, and setting up the bat detector, be aware of and alert to surroundings and type of terrain. Only proceed over uneven ground if you are comfortable and judge it safe to do so. Wear suitable sturdy footwear. Allow sufficient time for the activity. <p>This risk is reduced for the majority of citizen scientists by locating the detector on their own premises where any hazards will be known.</p>		2	2	4

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Unsafe trees and branches	Citizen Scientist	Injuries may result from falling tree branches or trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not approach trees which look unstable e.g. ash trees showing signs of ash dieback disease. Take particular care after storms and high winds/heavy rainfall which may have caused damage to trees or made them unstable from soft ground or soil erosion. Do not place detector under overhanging branches. 		1	5	5
Livestock	Citizen Scientist Detector equipment	Bites or kicks Damage to microphone and/or bat detector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bat detectors must not be located anywhere that may be accessed by livestock. If entering/crossing fields with grazing livestock to reach the chosen site for the bat detector set-up, maintain awareness and move steadily and without causing noise. Do not get between mothers and young and give all livestock space. Do not attempt to feed or pet the livestock or otherwise encourage them toward you. Do not enter fields containing livestock if you have a dog with you. 		1	3	3

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Landowners	Citizen Scientist DWT	Abuse of citizen scientist by landowners; Trespass; Reputational damage to DWT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If not setting up a bat detector on your own land, landowner permission MUST be obtained, and the landowner must sign the landowner permission slip downloadable from the website or available by email from bats@devonwildlifetrust.org. Detectors should not be placed on any land without permission. 		1	3	3
Setting up bat detector equipment	Citizen Scientist	Splinters from cane; possible electric shock or electrical fire from charging batteries, scratches to eyes or skin from placing detector in hedge/tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care and wear gloves when pushing bamboo cane into the ground (if used); alternatively the microphone can be attached to a tree or shrub branch at the right height. Apply all the usual precautions to using electrical equipment (the battery charger). Do not leave the charger plugged in with batteries charging and unattended as in rare circumstances the batteries can overheat and catch fire. 		2	3	6

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battery chargers are PAT tested or new for the 2025 survey. Take care when bending to place detector on the ground, or reaching into foliage to attach the microphone in order to avoid scratches. The microphone should be placed on the edge of a hedge and not in dense foliage. When carrying the bamboo cane, take care if other individuals are present, so as not to accidentally strike them. 				
Unscrupulous or aggressive individuals	Bat detector equipment Citizen Scientist	Vandalism or theft of bat detector; Harassment or abuse/injury to Citizen Scientist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The bat detector should only be placed on private land, with no public access, to reduce risk of theft or vandalism. If you wish to place the detector on someone else's land you should obtain permission in advance (please use our landowner permission letter and form) The private location means the Citizen Scientist should not come across any aggressive individuals while placing or removing the detector. 		2	3	6

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> However, if such individuals are encountered either at or en route to survey locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with them where appropriate and explain what is happening, answer questions politely. If any signs of aggression, placate, if possible, otherwise move away. Avoid being alone with aggressive individuals. If signs of intoxication (drugs, alcohol) are evident, move away and abandon activity immediately. If weapons (knives, firearms, air rifles, etc) are evident, move away and abandon activity immediately, and call police on 999. If intimidation, antagonism, or aggression becomes threatening call 999 (police) as soon as possible after moving to a safe place. 				
Biting or stinging insects, animals or plants	Citizen Scientist		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of, and avoid, plants that might cause skin irritation (i.e. stinging nettles and hogweed) and 		2	2	4

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		Bites and stings causing skin irritation, pain, infection or at worst, anaphylactic shock	biting/stinging animals and insects (i.e. adders, horseflies, bees, wasps, hornets) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always carry appropriate medication if you suffer from anaphylaxis. Seek medical attention if a bite/sting results in infection or blistering. 				
Ticks	Citizen Scientist	Lyme Disease from a tick bite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid walking through dense bracken. Check skin and clothing for ticks. Remove ticks carefully if found and remain vigilant for symptoms (bull's eye rash), seeking medical attention if symptoms occur. 		2	2	4
Water courses	Citizen Scientist	Slipping or falling into a water course could cause chills, hypothermia or drowning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of and look out for any streams, rivers, ponds, lakes or other water features on the land you are crossing. Stay away from the edges. 		1	5	5
Dead birds	Citizen Scientist	Transfer of avian bid flu from wild birds to humans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not approach or touch ill or dead wild birds. Do not accept any birds (alive or dead) from members of the public. 		1	3	3

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phone the DEFRA helpline to report any dead or suffering wild birds on 03459 33 55 77. 				
Electric fences	Citizen Scientist	Touching or crossing an electric fence could result in a shock, electrocution, or potential heart failure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be vigilant for electric fences, including knee high fences. Do not attempt to cross electric fences, find an alternative route. Do not cross electric fences if you have a pacemaker. 		1	5	5
Adverse Weather	Citizen Scientist	Sunburn, sunstroke, exposure, hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dress appropriately for conditions (e.g. sun hats, warm / waterproof clothing, sunscreen) If severe weather sets in – postpone or abandon detector set up. Be aware of river levels when close to water in case of flood risk. 		1	2	2
Lone working	Citizen Scientist	There is no specific hazard from lone working. However, some of the hazards described in this assessment could be more serious for an individual working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take/have someone with you to collect the detector from a host centre or to set it up on someone else's land (only with landowner's permission). If setting up the detector on land with permission, away from home, always let someone know where you are going and what time you will be back. 		1	5	5

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		unaccompanied, without someone to assist them.	<p>Ensure that person knows what action to take should you not return on time (e.g. attempt to contact you by phone; visit the location you were visiting, contact police)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry a charged mobile phone and try to remain within areas with a phone signal so that you can call for help if required. 				

Signed:	Lindsay Mahon	Print Name	Lindsay Mahon
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