

# Bats in the Box?

Following on from our article last month on Sustainable Warminster, in this issue we find out a bit more about one of their ongoing success stories, bats, from Harriet James.



Examining the wing of a bat to determine age and condition

Recent surveys have shown that Warminster has a large population of bats. There are 18 species living in the UK and our surveys have confirmed that there are at least 14 of these resident in Warminster. These include the Barbastelle, Bechstein, Lesser Horseshoe and Greater Horseshoe species which are specially protected under EU and UK legislation.

Following the popular 'Bats in the Park' event and 'Bat Box Making Day' last summer, Sustainable Warminster was able to commission surveys, with the help of a grant from Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy Fund (WWCE), from a professional ecologist, assisted by volunteers from the Wiltshire Bat Group. They recorded and analysed the supersonic calls of the bats and trapped and ringed bats in nets.

WWCE build solar energy farms on land where they enhance wildlife biodiversity at the same time as generating electricity. They have also installed solar panels on the new café at Langford Lakes.

A further grant this time from the Warminster Area Board enabled the purchase of rough sawn cedar for



Members of the Wiltshire Bat Group working on identifying a bat



A Bechstein bat. This species has never been recorded before in the Warminster area

making the bat boxes. Over 110 bat boxes have been put up on houses and trees in and around Warminster.

Now that spring is approaching, Sustainable Warminster are asking people who have boxes to look out for signs of activity.

Like hedgehogs and dormice, bats will soon be emerging from hibernation. In the next few months they will be moving between roost sites in attics, trees or underground spaces. The boxes may be attractive

to females looking for safe and dry maternity roosts where they will gather together to give birth.

Bats and their roosts are legally protected, so it is illegal to disturb them, therefore if anyone thinks they have bats in their attic, behind tiles of cladding, in an outbuilding or a bat box, Sustainable Warminster ask that they report this to them so advice can be sought if they are found.

For more information contact  
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Signs of residents may include streaks on the wood below the cavities