

**Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*)**

**Areas and status:** SW and W midlands of England; Wales and W Ireland. Dramatic declines in 20<sup>th</sup> C years but numbers have started to increase in the past 20 years.

**Woodland type:** Broadleaved Woodland, Wet Woodland

**Preferred habitat niches:** High forest, veteran trees, wood-pasture, parkland, dead wood, glades, rides, edges, scrub mosaic and closed canopy. Forages in deciduous woodland, riparian trees, along hedgerows and tree lines and has a typical nightly foraging radius of 2km. Lesser horseshoe bats usually roost and breed in buildings and hibernate in underground sites

**Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:**

- Loss of roost sites in and within 3km of woodlands
- Drainage of wet woodlands
- Loss of linear landscape features (hedges, shelterbelts, rows of riparian trees, etc) linking roosting and foraging sites.



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<b>Potential habitat management solutions:</b>	
<i>Prescription</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Minimal intervention	Protect existing/potential roosts in woodlands; these will be in built structures such as houses, barns and military fortifications in spring, summer and autumn; ice houses, tunnels, mines, caves, cellars and military fortifications as hibernation sites in winter. Retain areas of dense understorey and closed canopy Do not carry out operations which create high levels of disturbance close to known roosting sites. If this work is essential, liaise with local SNCO office.
Rides, Glades	Cut rides, glades, edges and other open areas (Zone 2 and/or 3) but retain patches of tall herbs, cut these on 3-5yr rotation.
Drainage	Retain/enlarge areas of wet woodland. Dam drainage ditches and culverts as needed. Create ponds/lakes in areas with little ecological value.
Deadwood	Retain standing and fallen deadwood and where suitable retain surrounding understorey growth.
Connectivity	Manage woodland on landscape-scale to ensure good links with foraging areas and roosting sites. Protect networks of mature hedgerows, tree lines, woodlands, meadows and wetlands.
Woodland creation (Natural regeneration, Native species and/or Variable density)	Create woodland on areas of low ecological value to enlarge existing woodland, link nearby woods and create additional foraging habitat. Allow natural regeneration or plant a diverse mix of locally native trees and shrubs.



■ Current distribution

Source: Bat Conservation Trust