

Final Report Mulkear(Lesser Horseshoe Bat Conservation Project) EIP- LLOC5019

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary of the original proposal set the parameters of the scheme;

The lesser Horseshoe Bat population is now just under 13,000 animals and its conservation status is “inadequate” (NPWS 2019). The fragmentation of the Irish landscape due to changes in its use has created gaps in the distribution of the Lessor Horseshoe bat. Further declines in the population are inevitable unless action is taken. A lack of easily accessible unoccupied structures on farms is one of the key constraints limiting the distribution of the lessor horseshoe bat.

The Executive Summary of the final report sets out how this and expands on this.

The EIP is a partnership between the Mulkear River Catchment EIP and the charity Vincent Wildlife Trust(VWT).

Brief Description of the Project:

The original proposal and Final Report have the same objective;

- The aim of the project is to provide new and permanent roosting sites for the Lessor Horseshoe Bat in lowland locations along the Mulkear river.

Six new permanent structures were built on farmland during 2022. Suitable habitats had been identified from a desktop study of satellite imagery. Farmers were approached in these areas to become part of the project.

More detailed reporting to address:

Baseline data:

The Final report demonstrates that the scheme was operated as intended. Site suitability was based on the following criteria, the presence of mature hedgerow and tree cover, waterbody within 1 km, level & dry ground to facilitate construction, adequate vehicle access, minimum loss of productive land, outside of designated areas and risk of disturbance. The NPWS surveyed the sites, and the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage had no conservation supports.

KPI:

The original proposal’s main objectives are increased & expanded on in the final report:

- 10 roosts constructed with biodiversity features incorporated for other wildlife.
- Bat detector workshops.
- Video documentary. Leaflets for “Actions for Lessor Horseshoe Bats on farms”.
- Post project support for farmers.
- Post project bat monitoring programme.
- Evidence of bats in roosts.

Closing evaluation:

The Final Report recorded that the original proposals and Final Reports KPI’s were not all achieved. Due to building cost increases, 6 of the proposed roosts were built. Other KPI’s cannot be measured within the time frame of the EIP(evidence of bats in roosts).

VFM:

The Final Report's Finance section lists no instances of value for money.

Financial report:

The Final Report included the financial report, which outlined all expenditure. In total €166,749.00 was spent in accordance with the original application.

Lessons learned/actions to carry forward.

The Final Report list several lessons learned/actions to carry forward, the main ones being.

- Assurances re planning permission should be obtained by future projects,
- The self-build model is more suited to projects of longer duration.
- Future projects should consider one builder for the entire project as it would be more cost efficient and possibly attract more builders to tender.
- Several of the KPI's to be completed in 2023.

Project dissemination:

The final report outlined various dissemination activities:

- Video prepared for launch.
- Video of construction and footage from trail cameras available on Mulkear and VWT websites.
- A six-page leaflet on project produced.

Conclusion:

Overall, the final report reflects the original proposals and gives fact-based evidence for how they were carried out. Although only 6 of the original 10 roosts proposed were constructed this was mainly due to the project being scaled back because of a steep increase in building costs post C19(original roost cost €7,000-final cost €10,500).

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