

VALUING OUR ENVIRONMENT - BATS

THE LONG TAILED BAT IS A SMALL NATIVE NOCTURNAL MAMMAL THAT CAN BE FOUND ROOSTING IN TREES THROUGHOUT THE WAIKATO AND WIDER NEW ZEALAND. IT WEIGHS THE EQUIVALENT OF TWO FRUIT BURST LOLLIES AND CAN FLY AT SPEEDS OF UP TO 60KM/HR.

Monitoring suggests that there are a number of these bats in the Mangaonua,

Mangaharakeke and Mangaone gullies. Trees that require felling need to be monitored and cleared of bats using a range of different methods.

- Acoustic Bat Monitors (ABMs) – two nights of monitoring is required
- Dusk/Dawn Watches – bat ecologists watch the trees and use hand held acoustic monitors to detect any roosting behaviour
- Visual inspections which involve climbing the trees, using an endoscope to visually inspect all potential bat roost areas

When trees are inspected, any potential

roost areas such as holes, cracks and broken branches are filled with expansion foam which prevents the bats from returning to the roost. Trees can then be felled without risk to bats.

If bats are found in a tree, the process starts again until they have relocated to another tree outside of the main expressway alignment.

To help lure bats away from the construction zone, artificial bat roosts imported from Germany are placed in nearby trees. These roosts are made out of Woodcrete® and are pest proofed with aluminium sheets that prevent rodents from climbing the trees.



Close up of a bat



Sunset bat monitoring



Inspection of a potential bat roost tree



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