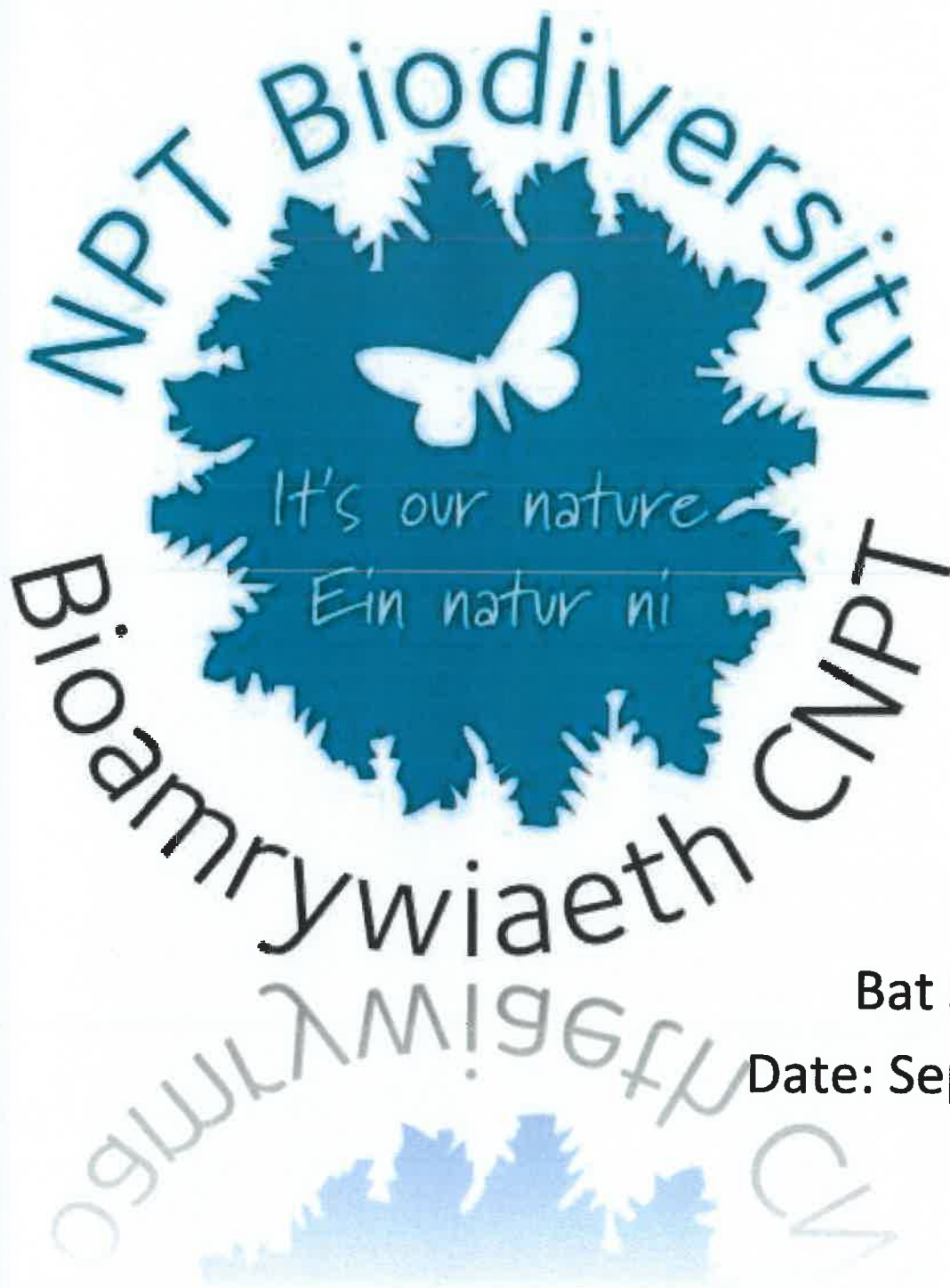




**Metal Box
Bat Survey Report
Date: September 2023**

by

**Lewis Badham
Planning Ecologist
Countryside and Wildlife Team
Neath Port Talbot CBC**

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DECLARATION

The information, advice and opinions which we have prepared and provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the CIEEM's Code of Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

Signed:

X L Badham

Lewis Badham

Planning Ecologist

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Price'.

Megan Price

Ecologist (Planning & Consultancy)

The following report is considered a reasonable and true representation of the ecological situation on the site assessed. The report is however just a snapshot assessment therefore the authors are unable to guarantee that all biodiversity interest has been identified. In addition, if works are not undertaken, a programmed re-assessment will be required. The survey information is considered applicable for two years from the date of the survey.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Metal Box, an office and factory building complex, on the south-western outskirts of Neath, is proposed for roofing works.

Low levels of activity were recorded on site during the initial emergence survey. No bats were observed leaving the building over the course of the survey.

Low levels of bat activity were recorded on site during the second emergence survey. No bats were observed leaving the building over the course of the survey.

Low levels of bat activity were recorded on site during the third emergence survey. No bats were observed leaving the building over the course of the survey.

It is understood that works will be solely targeted at roof remedial works. No bats were observed roosting within the building complex. A derogation license from Natural Resources Wales will not be required for roofing works.

As a form of enhancement, it is recommended that 3 house sparrow terrace nest boxes be deployed upon the building, under the eaves in line with manufacturing guidance. The exact location of these will be confirmed with the ecologist on site during installation. These boxes should be installed post renovations work.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SITE LOCATION

At the time of writing, Metal Box, an office and factory building complex on the south-western outskirts of Neath, is proposed for roofing works. Location is shown on the aerial photograph below. Grid reference for centre of building is SS 74286 96322.



The building is surrounded by hard standing pathways and car parking areas for pedestrian and vehicle access. Metal Box pond is situated approximately 270m south-west. The Neath Canal lies 40m to the south-east, while the River Neath lies approximately 250m north-west.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

At the time of writing, the full extent of the proposed works are not yet finalised; however, it is known that works will include general roofing works to the building.

1.3 SCOPE OF SURVEY

The objectives of the survey were to obtain sufficient data to:-

1. Identify potential bat activity levels and use of buildings on site e.g. roosting within the buildings identified and/or foraging in and around the surrounding area;
2. Identify any other potential constraints to redevelopment on the site from other species present;
3. Assess whether the proposed redevelopment of the buildings on site would be likely to have an impact upon those species, if present;
4. Make recommendations for further survey work (if necessary) to establish the seasonal use of the site and to help determine the species status, if present; and
5. Recommend a mitigation strategy (where possible) for those habitats/species present that pose a constraint to the redevelopment of the site.

2 BASELINE SURVEY RESULTS

2.1 PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

2.1.1 SURVEY METHOD

An external building assessment was undertaken which assessed the suitability of the building to support roosting bats.

Externally the building was surveyed, with the aid of binoculars where necessary, for evidence of access points and droppings, grease marks and urine staining. The buildings were examined in order to identify features that are favoured by bats as roosting sites, including pitched roofs with a void/loft, behind fascia boards and soffits, in and through gaps around windows and hanging tiles or weatherboarding. Any potential access points are recorded, along with any external physical evidence of use by roosting bats, such as urine staining and/or droppings around access points, on windows and on window ledges.

An assessment of the potential of the building to support nesting birds was also carried out at the same time.

2.1.2 SURVEY RESULTS

Due to the openness of the internal structure of the building, it was deemed unnecessary to conduct an internal inspection, as there are no roof void spaces that can be safely accessed. The roof is also in a dangerous state rendering external close inspection impossible due to health and safety concerns. The only part of the roof able to be inspected was where the surveyors were positioned. No other part of the roof was accessible.

Table 1 below contains photos providing an overview of the overall structure of the roof.

Table 1. Photos highlighting roof structure of the Metal Box building

	
Overview of south-western elevations.	Overview of roof structure – facing north
	
Overview of roof structure – facing north-west	Overview of roof structure – facing west.

The building is an office / factory building complex with corrugated metal roofing, of brick construction and three storeys in height.

Potential access points for roosting bats were observed during the preliminary roosting assessment: gaps were observed between the brick walls and the metal fascia of the building; the overall roofline structure is very complex and extensive, rendering thorough inspection difficult. Overall, the building was considered to be of Low - Moderate potential to support roosting bats, given the features present and the environment in which the building is situated.

3.2 EMERGENCE SURVEY

3.2.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The surveys were conducted in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Collins J. 2016). The building was assessed as having Low – Moderate potential to support roosting bats. Two emergence surveys were carried out.

The first dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the 7th August 2023 (by Marie Fowler, Megan Price, Lewis Badham and Rebecca Sharp) in weather conditions conducive to bat activity i.e. little or no rain and temperatures in excess of 10° C. The emergence survey began approximately 30 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 2 hours after sunset. Two surveyors were positioned so as to cover the majority of the roofline on top of the building; another two surveyors were stationed along the south-west and north-west elevations.

The second dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the 23rd August 2023 (by Marie Fowler, Megan Price and Sarah Williams) in weather conditions conducive to bat activity i.e. little or no rain and temperatures in excess of 10° C. The emergence survey began approximately 30 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 2 hours after sunset. Two surveyors were positioned so as to cover the majority of the roofline on top of the building; another surveyor was stationed along the south-west elevation.

The third dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the 15th September 2023 (by Megan Price, Lewis Badham and Rebecca Sharp) in weather conditions conducive to bat activity i.e. little or no rain and temperatures in excess of 10° C. The emergence survey began approximately 30 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 2 hours after sunset. . Two surveyors were positioned so as to cover the majority of the roofline on top of the building; another surveyor was stationed along the south-west elevations.

Each surveyor was equipped with either a SSF Bat 2 detector, Echometer Touch Pro detector and iPad or an Elekon Batscanner bat detector.

3.2.2 LIMITATIONS

There were no limitations to the survey as it was carried out at the correct time of year in conducive weather conditions.

3.2.3 RESULTS

7th August 2023

Low levels of activity were recorded on site during the initial emergence survey. An individual Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was observed commuting north-west while a Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) was seen commuting south-east. Low levels of pipistrelle foraging were observed within the immediate vicinity of the building. No bats were observed leaving the building over the course of the survey. A plan highlighting surveyor positions and bat activity over the course of the survey can be found at Appendix 1. A summary table of the data collected over the course of the survey can be found at Appendix 4.

23rd August 2023

Low levels of bat activity were recorded on site during the emergence survey. A single unidentified species of bat was seen emerging from a gap along the eaves of the building on the north-western elevation, near a valley. Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) was heard within the local vicinity but not seen. No bats were observed leaving the building over the course of the survey. A plan highlighting surveyor positions and bat activity over the course of the survey can be found at Appendix 2. A summary table of the data collected over the course of the survey can be found at Appendix 5.

15th September 2023

Low levels of bat activity were recorded on site during the emergence survey. Soprano and Common Pipistrelle were observed commuting past the south-west elevations, Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) was heard within the local vicinity but not seen. No bats were observed leaving the building over the course of the survey. A plan highlighting surveyor positions and bat activity over the course of the survey can be found at Appendix 3. A summary table of the data collected over the course of the survey can be found at Appendix 6.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATION

4.1 SITE WORKS METHOD

It is unknown as to when works will commence upon the building and the plans for the site are in the planning phase at the time of writing. It is understood that works will be solely targeted at roof remedial works. No bats were observed roosting within the building complex. A derogation license from Natural Resources Wales will not be required for roofing works.

As the roof is known to support breeding Herring Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull, it is recommended that works are undertaken outside of the nesting bird season, i.e.

between the months of March and August inclusive. If this is not possible, the building will need to be subject to a nesting bird check; this will just be a brief watch on the day of the demolition starting by a qualified ecologist.

4.2 ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

In line with the general principles set out in SPG: Biodiversity and Geodiversity (May 2018) and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 the application is required to demonstrate how biodiversity enhancement is to be achieved.

As a form of enhancement, it is recommended that 3 house sparrow terrace nest boxes be deployed upon the building, under the eaves in line with manufacturing guidance. The exact location of these will be confirmed with the ecologist on site during installation. These boxes should be installed post renovations work.

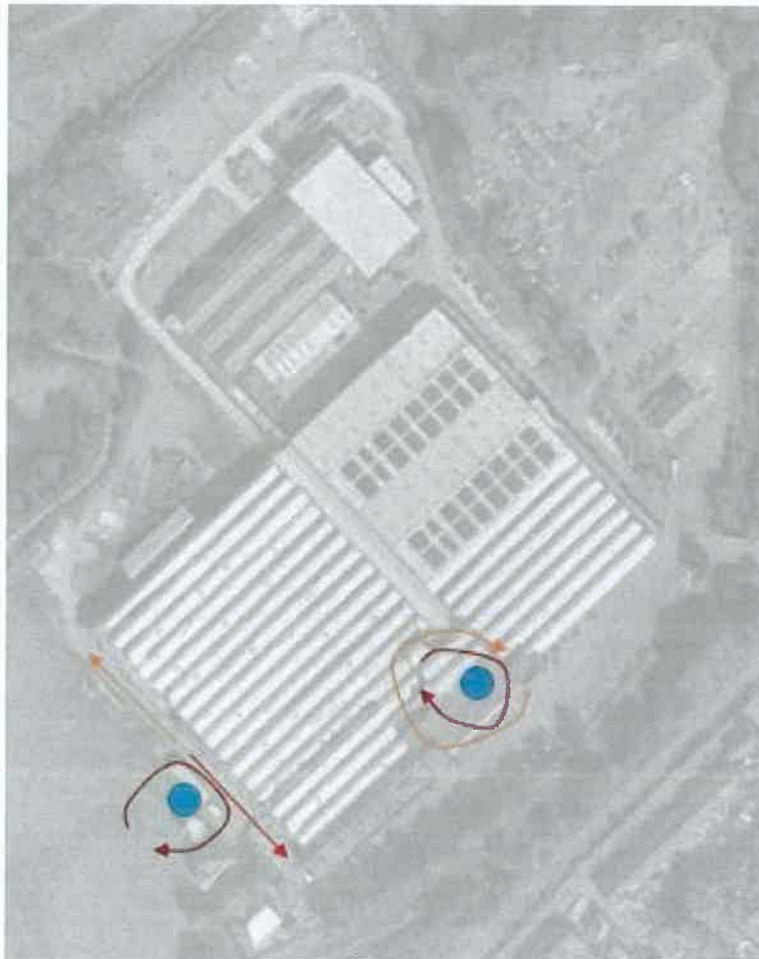
5 REFERENCES

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- Joint Nature Conservation Committee.** (1993). Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey. A technique for environmental Audit.
- Wales Biodiversity Partnership.** Environment (Wales) Act 2016: Section 7 List of Species of Principal Importance for Conservation of Biological Diversity in Wales.
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- Wales Biodiversity Partnership.** (2008). Wildlife Sites Guidance Wales. A guide to develop local wildlife systems in Wales.

6 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – 2023-08-07: FLIGHT LINES & SURVEYOR POSITIONS

2023/08/07 Emergence Survey: Metal Box

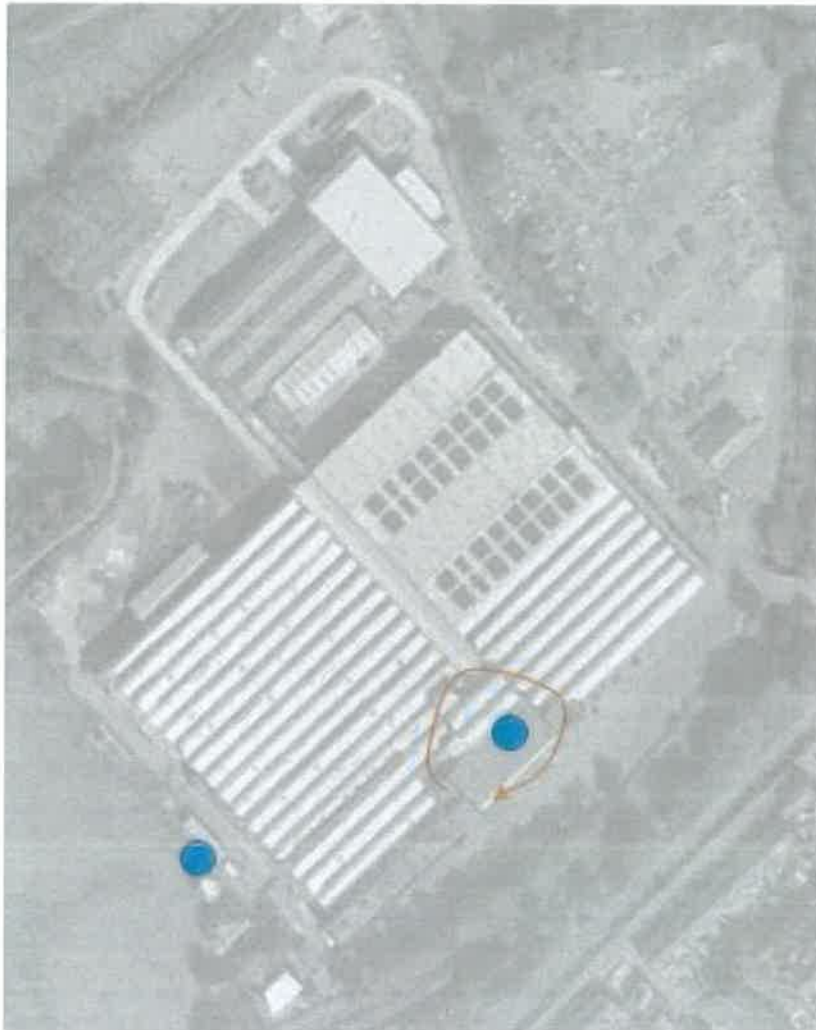


Key

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Surveyor |  No |
|  Commuting |  Pp |
|  Emergence |  Ppy |
|  Foraging | |

APPENDIX 2 - 2023-08-23: FLIGHT LINES & SURVEYOR POSITIONS

2023/08/23 Emergence Survey: Metal Box

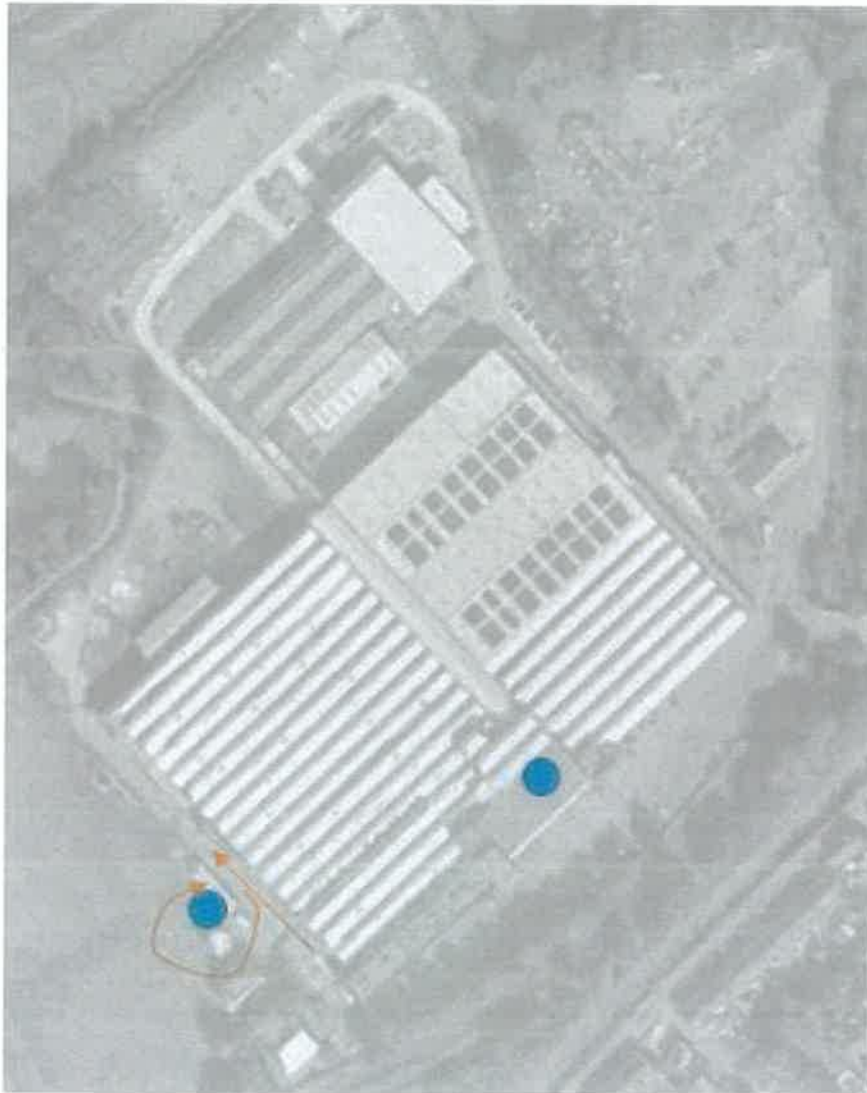


Key

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Surveyor |  Nn |
|  Commuting |  Pp |
|  Emergence |  Ppy |
|  Foraging | |

APPENDIX 3 – 2023-09-15: FLIGHT LINES & SURVEYOR POSITIONS

2023/09/15 Emergence Survey: Metal Box



Key

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Surveyor |  Nn |
|  Commuting |  Pp |
|  Emergence |  Ppy |
|  Foraging | |

APPENDIX 4 – 2023-08-07 SURVEY SUMMARY TABLE

<u>Dusk Emergence/ Dawn Re-entry Survey Form</u>			
Surveyors:	Rebecca Sharp, Marie Fowler, Megan Price, Lewis Badham		
Date:	07/08/2023		
Location/ Project:	Metal Box		
Feature/s being surveyed:	Roofline; South-west Elevation		
Time Start:	20:51	Time Finish:	22:22
Sunset time:	20:54	Detectors Used:	Echometer Touch; Petterson; SSF2
Temperature Start (°C):	15	Temperature Finish (°C):	15
Cloud Cover (%):	100%	Cloud Cover Finish (%):	100%
Humidity Start (%):	76	Humidity Finish (%):	76
Wind Start:	Slight	Wind Finish:	Slight
Precipitation:	None.		
Land Use:	Industrial		
Surrounding Land Use:	Industry; Flood plain; River; Canal		
Time:	Species:	Activity & Direction:	
21:02	Pp	commuted north-west	
21:18	Ppy	Commuted south-east	

21:21	Ppy	Commuted
21:27	Ppy	Foraging around surveyor
21:34	Pp	Commuting south-east
21:43 - 22:20	Pp, Ppy	Foraging around surveyor

APPENDIX 5 – 2023-08-23 SURVEY SUMMARY TABLE

<u>Dusk Emergence/ Dawn Re-entry Survey Form</u>			
Surveyors:	Megan Price, Marie Fowler, Sarah Williams		
Date:	23/08/2023		
Location/ Project:	Metal Box		
Feature/s being surveyed:	Roofline; South-west Elevation		
Time Start:	19:45	Time Finish:	21:35
Sunset time:	20:06	Detectors Used:	Echometer Touch; Petterson; SSF2
Temperature Start (°C):	17	Temperature Finish (°C):	16
Cloud Cover (%):	60%	Cloud Cover Finish (%):	55%
Humidity Start (%):	64	Humidity Finish (%):	64
Wind Start:	Slight	Wind Finish:	Slight
Precipitation:	None.		
Land Use:	Industrial		
Surrounding Land Use:	Industry; Flood plain; River; Canal		
Time:	Species:	Activity & Direction:	
20:36	Pp	HNS	
20:39	Nn	HNS	

21:05	Pp	HNS
21:23	Pp	Foraging
21:32	Pp	HNS

APPENDIX 6 – 2023-09-15 SURVEY SUMMARY TABLE

<u>Dusk Emergence/ Dawn Re-entry Survey Form</u>			
Surveyors:	Rebecca Sharp, Megan Price, Lewis Badham		
Date:	15/09/2023		
Location/ Project:	Metal Box		
Feature/s being surveyed:	Roofline; South-west Elevation		
Time Start:	19:34	Time Finish:	21:00
Sunset time:	19:30	Detectors Used:	Echometer Touch; Petterson; SSF2
Temperature Start (°C):	20	Temperature Finish (°C):	18
Cloud Cover (%):	55%	Cloud Cover Finish (%):	55%
Humidity Start (%):	70	Humidity Finish (%):	70
Wind Start:	Slight	Wind Finish:	Slight
Precipitation:	None.		
Land Use:	Industrial		
Surrounding Land Use:	Industry; Flood plain; River; Canal		
Time:	Species:	Activity & Direction:	
19:43	Pp	Commuting south-east	
20:03	Ppy	HNS	

20:09	P sp.	HNS
20:24	Pp	Foraging around south-west elevation
20:38	Nn	HNS
20:30 - 20:56	Ppy, Pp	HNS