

1 Planning your bat detecting outing

Not all outings will produce a 'sighting', but you will increase your chance of seeing or hearing a bat if you take the following factors into consideration when planning your trip.

- Bats are much more active in spring and summer (October to February) than they are in the winter.
- You are more likely to see or hear bats on fine warm nights.
- Bats roost in old or large trees and live mainly in areas that have established vegetation. At night they look for food along bush edges and roads, and in gaps through the bush, so start your search in these places.
- Bats emerge from their roosts after sunset. While some come out as soon as the sun goes down others may take up to 30 minutes to emerge.
- To get the best view, stand underneath tall old trees where you can look up and out at a patch of clear sky. This makes it easier to see the bat's silhouette against the sky.
- Areas that have a lot of light or road noise are less likely to have bat activity.

Generally, there are no issues visiting public reserves in the evening. However, these areas often back on to private residential properties, so please take care not to disturb neighbours and be considerate of other people who may also be visiting the area.



Photographer: Kerry Borkin

2 Minimising bat disturbance

Bats are generally sensitive to high levels of light and noise. While looking for bats it is a good idea to:

- keep noise levels to a minimum
- avoid shining your torch as much as possible, particularly in roost sites
- use a red lens torch or place red cellophane over your torch
- leave your dog at home.

3 Using a bat detector

All of our bat detectors come with batteries, but we can't guarantee the amount of life left in them, so it pays to take spare batteries with you. Ask our staff about the type of battery you will need.

Bat detectors are directional, so the nearer a bat is to the detector, the louder it sounds. They generally have a range of 20 metres to 30 metres.

In addition to helping us locate bats, detectors also help us study bat behaviour. For example, when a bat closes in on a flying insect it wants to eat, it starts to 'call' very rapidly. The number of calls per second are so rapid that the individual calls merge into a buzz, producing a sound on the detector known as a 'feeding buzz'. See if you can pick up a feeding buzz.

To use a bat detector:

- switch it on
- check the frequency dial is set to 40kHz
- turn up the volume to ensure you don't miss any bat passes – you can turn it down once you know what you are listening for
- point the microphone forwards and upwards at a slight angle.

4 Health and safety

- Some of the most popular areas for bat detecting outings in Hamilton city are close to the Waikato River or gullies, so it's important that members of your group are aware of the terrain, keep to the tracks and stay together.
- If you are unfamiliar with the site you are planning to visit, take a look during the day to orientate yourself.
- Ensure you are well equipped with a first aid kit, warm and waterproof clothing, appropriate footwear and a torch.
- Where there are bats there are often mosquitoes, so arm yourself with suitable clothing and insect repellent.

5 Tell us about the bats you detect

If you are lucky enough to see or hear bats, please help us improve our records of bats in the city by filling out the online bat sighting form.

Our online bat sighting form is simple to complete and will take just a few minutes.

You will find it at www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/Forms/Enquiries/Bat-sighting-form/.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the online bat sighting form. The page header includes the Waikato Regional Council logo and navigation links. The form is titled "Bat sighting" and includes a brief introduction. It is divided into three main sections: "Your details", "Sighting details", and a "Check your information" button at the bottom.

Your details

Name: ✓
Phone:
Email: ✓
Address:

Your details

Name: ✓
Phone:
Email: ✓
Address:

Sighting details

Date seen: ✓

October 2012						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Location: ✓
Suburb: ✓
Was a bat detector used? Yes No
Number seen: ✓
Any other comments:

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For more information

Freephone the Waikato Regional Council on 0800 800 401 or visit www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/projectecho.