



Lesser horseshoe bat



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Latin: *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Irish: *laltóg crúshrónach*

Size:
wingspan of 19-25cm

Months seen:
April – October. Lesser horseshoes hibernate for the winter months.

Habitat: They usually roost in the roofs of old houses, sheds, and other old buildings. During the winter, the lesser horseshoe hibernates in caves, disused cellars and souterrains.

Food: Lesser horseshoes usually forage in woodland and scrub areas, feeding on insects such as moths, beetles and flies.

Features: The lesser horseshoe is the only known member of the Rhinolopidae family in Ireland. The other 8 species of bat in Ireland belong to the Vespertilionidae family. It gets its name from its distinctive horseshoe-shaped nose. It is also the only bat species in Ireland to hang by its feet and wrap its wings around its body.

The lesser horseshoe is a rare bat and is only found in six counties in the west of Ireland: Mayo, Clare, Galway, Kerry, Limerick and Cork. The Irish population of this species is considered of international importance as it has become extinct in many parts of Europe. This is mainly due to loss of forests and woodlands.

Lesser horseshoes usually come out shortly after sunset. They find their way around by using their echolocation, or navigation system. This works as a type of sonar – the bats can tell how far away an object is by measuring the time delay between their own call and any echoes that return.

Other bat species in Ireland: Leisler's bat; brown long-eared bat; Daubenton's bat; Natterer's bat; whiskered bat; common pipistrelle; soprano pipistrelle; Brandt's bat.