

The
Vincent Wildlife
Trust



The Vincent Wildlife Trust
in Ireland

About The Vincent Wildlife Trust in Ireland

Who we are

The Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT) has been at the forefront of wildlife conservation in Britain and Ireland for over 40 years. The Trust established a permanent presence in Ireland in 1995 and the majority of our work has been centered on the bat species, and in particular the lesser horseshoe bat.

Today, our work in Ireland has a broader remit and focuses not only on the bat species but also on other mammals in need; in particular members of the Mustelid family, which includes the pine marten and the stoat. Where a need is identified, the Trust will initiate a research programme that will support other bodies working to safeguard the future of all mammals in Ireland.

What we do

Our specific niche is as an organisation that undertakes surveys to identify the current status of mammal species of concern, carries out pioneering conservation-led research, publishes the details of this work and offers expert advice to others through practical demonstration. Our innovative research has helped provide solutions to conservation issues locally and internationally.

Survey and monitoring, research, education, training and advocacy together represent the work of the VWT.



Our work with Bats

Between 1991-1994, in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the VWT funded a full-time Bat Conservation Officer who travelled throughout the country promoting bat education and conservation measures. Since 1998 the Trust's bat work has focused on one species, the lesser horseshoe bat.

Lesser horseshoe bat

The Irish population of this species is estimated at 14,000 individuals, confined to six western counties. It is thought that this species arrived into Ireland from the west coast of the United Kingdom several thousand years ago, when the island of Ireland was covered in deciduous forests.

Since 1994, the VWT has established reserves for lesser horseshoe bats and coordinated summer and winter surveys across its range. Now with two members of staff in Ireland, the Trust continues to provide advice to maintain and enhance conditions for this species.

Photographs: (above) Lesser horseshoe bat © Frank Greenaway, (right) Sunbathing pine marten © Paul Lalor, (far right) Irish stoat © Dermot Breen.

VWT Reserves

In the late 1980s, the VWT purchased a major roost for greater horseshoe bats in the south-west of Britain. Further bat roosts were acquired in the 1990s and today the Trust manages roost sites in Britain and in Ireland.

In Ireland, the Trust manages 13 roost sites used by lesser horseshoe bats: two in Mayo, one in Galway, two in Clare and eight in Kerry. All are summer breeding sites, although during mild winters up to 1,000 bats hibernate in the Kerry sites. During summer 2016, a total of 3,905 lesser horseshoe bats used Trust properties in Ireland, equivalent to 27% of the national population.

Training workshops based around the Trust's reserves are run to inform others about appropriate mitigation measures for horseshoe bats in Ireland, and a leaflet about the species aimed at farmers is available to download from the Trust's websites.

Photograph: Derreen Bridge Cottage, County Kerry.



Our work with Mustelids

Pine marten

The pine marten is considered one of the rarest and most elusive wildlife species in Ireland. Due to persecution and indirect poisoning, this native species was on the point of extinction by the mid 1970s. Following the introduction of legal protection in 1976, the population of this small woodland animal is slowly making a recovery.

The VWT provides advice on the pine marten to householders and forest managers and is involved in a number of studies monitoring its recovery in Ireland. The Trust is also working on methods to prevent pine marten predation on game and domestic fowl.

Irish stoat

The Irish stoat is an important element of Irish biodiversity, but little is known about this native mammal. There is a need to develop an effective survey methodology.

In 2010, the VWT successfully completed the first hair-tube study on this species. Since then, the Trust has been working with NUIG on its 'Irish Stoat Project' which aims to provide crucial information on their ecology.



How you can help

You can support The Vincent Wildlife Trust in the following ways:

- **Report a sighting** and encourage others to do the same. We would appreciate it if you would let us know about any observations you make of pine martens or stoats.
- **Become a friend** of the VWT to receive newsletters and other updates on the Trust's work in Ireland.
- **Donate** to the VWT to help continue our work on those species that need our help, including the lesser horseshoe bat, Irish stoat and the pine marten.

Visit mammals-in-ireland.ie for more details.

Contact us

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Cover photographs: (clockwise from left) Pine marten © Andrew Kelly, Lesser horseshoe bats © Frank Greenaway, Irish stoat © Dermot Breen.