



# Bat rehabilitation and its role in education and conservation

Dr Amy Williams Schwartz

# Bat care in the UK

Bat Care Network of volunteers co-ordinated and run by the Bat Conservation Trust.

Volunteers fit into one of three categories:

1. Carers
2. Ambulance drivers
3. Helpline volunteers



# Bat carers

- Work on their own or as part of a bat group
- Listed on the BCT's UK Bat Care Network – need to be fully vaccinated against rabies and have an existing carer as a referee
- Trained on an informal apprenticeship-like basis by other experienced bat carers
- Follow BCT's Bat Care Guidelines



# Ambulance drivers

- Often done by people who wish to become bat care trainees – but not always!
- Working under a carer – you and the carer should fill in an ambulance driver agreement and return to BCT

Bat Conservation Trust  
**Bat Rehabilitation**  
How to get involved



Pipistrelle in care.

Guidance on how to get involved with bat rehabilitation and the support available

# Helpline volunteers

- Volunteer for either BCT or a regional helpline
- Calls come through the BCT National Bat Helpline
- Put bat finders in touch with a carer or ambulance driver in their local area as well as provide advice on how to safely contain the bat

The diagram illustrates the helpline process. At the top, a 'Bat Finder' box is connected by a dotted line with a telephone icon to a 'Bat Carer' box. Below the 'Bat Finder' box, a solid line with a telephone icon leads to a circular logo for 'Volunteer Bat Care Helpline' featuring a bat wearing a headset. A large purple oval contains the text: 'Volunteers on the VBCH answer calls to connect bat finders with bat carers to help bats in need to secure and enhance bat populations'. At the bottom of the diagram is the 'Bat Conservation Trust' logo, which includes a globe icon.

The photograph below shows a volunteer kit in a white box with a green lid, placed on a silver reflective surface. The kit includes a blue and white striped shirt, a pair of black gloves, and a telephone handset. A white card in front of the box displays the phone number '0345 1300 228' and the text 'National Bat Helpline' with the Bat Conservation Trust logo.

# Why is bat care important?

For the individual, yes, but also...

- Public engagement - speaking to members of the public during collections of bats/releases
- Data collection - some species can be cryptic and hard to identify in the field (e.g. Whiskered/Brandt's bat - including in odd places!)
- Protection of roosts as a result of the above



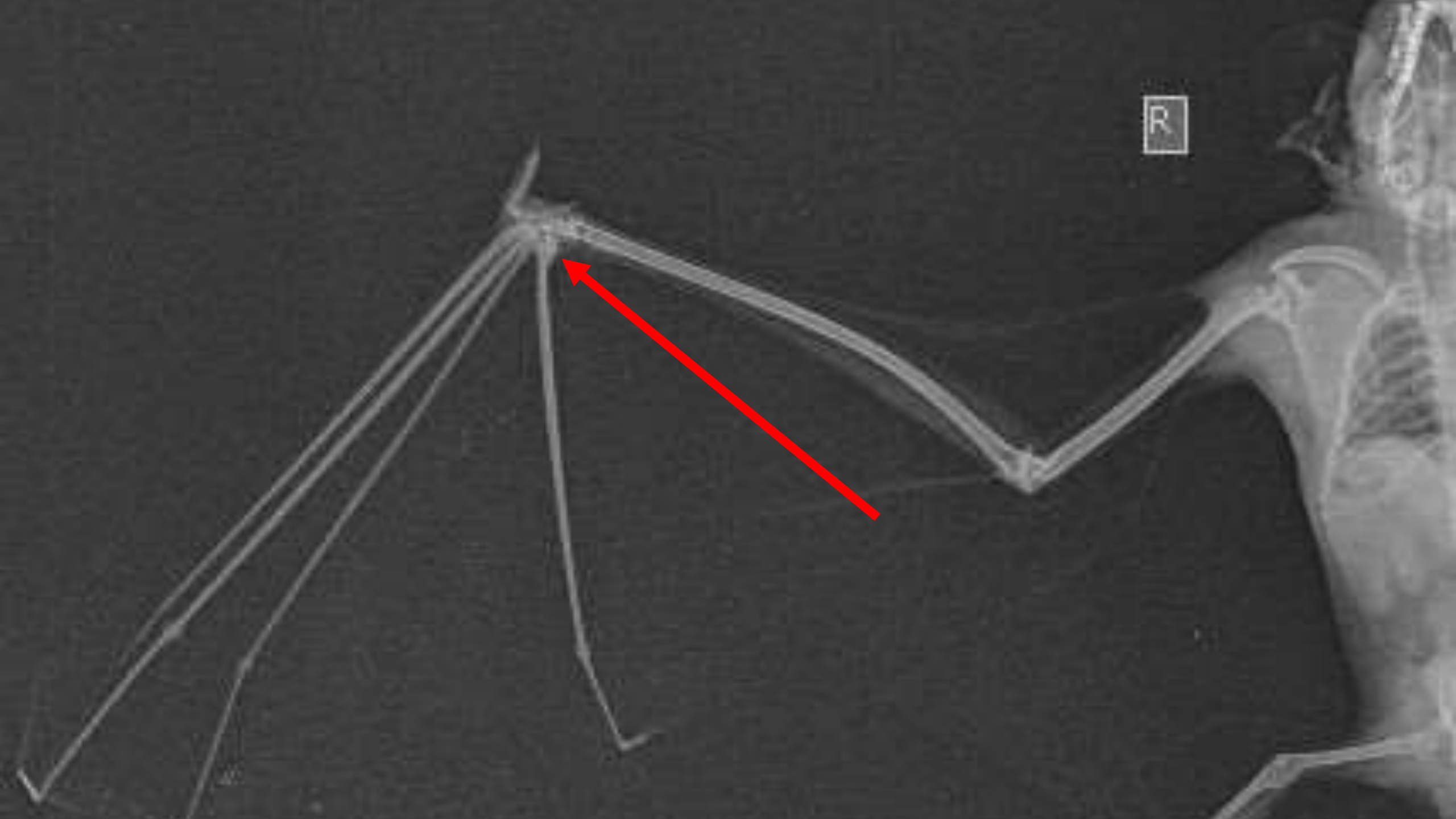
# Introduction to Griff, everyone's favourite Noctule\*

- Came to me in autumn 2021
- Found in the possessions of a cat
- Injuries included small holes in wings, swollen right wrist and very thin
- Unclear at first whether the wrist was broken – treated with antibiotics and an anti-inflammatory/painkiller



\*probably







# Education bats

- As European Protected Species, all species of native bats in the UK require a license to keep permanently (in this case from NRW)
- Not all individual bats are suitable for long-term captivity and their mental and physical wellbeing must be prioritised when making decisions on bats' futures



# Public engagement



Thanks so much Amy, Griff was a real star. Hope he has a well earned rest.

I met Twitter celebrity #GriffTheBat this morning - possibly the highlight of my year! Thank you @lizardschwartz - we learnt so much about Griff and his bat friends 🦇



Big thank you to @lizardschwartz for bringing in Griff the Noctule bat to @PorthkerryWild meeting this morning.

He was certainly hungry!



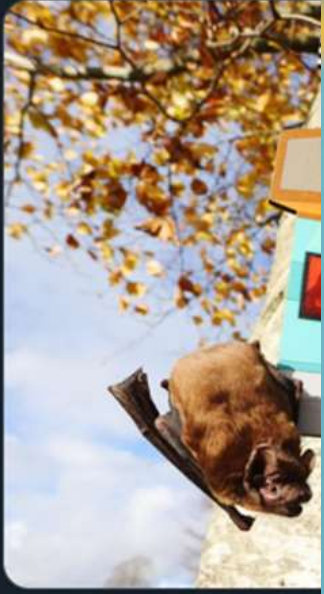
100% our pleasure, you are both total stars. And \*really\* nice to see the grown-ups just as enchanted as the kids with your cute ball of fluff'n'fangs!! You made a lot of people's year, never mind day today, thank you \*SO\* much for coming.





**Bat Conservation Trust** @\_BCT\_ · Dec 6, 2022

Thanks to @lizardschwartz and #GriffTheBat for teaming up with us and @NOW to encourage Brits to help protect the declining UK bat population as part of the release of #T batboxcompetition.nowtv.c



# Discovery of new roosts...

- Often get calls of grounded babies/small juveniles in June/July
- Makes it easy to locate maternity roosts – they won't have gone far!











# Discovery of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Serotine maternity roost for Wales!

- My colleague & bat care trainee Jenny attended a call for me on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023 where a bat had been found grounded in a garden in St Fagan's
- She sent photos and it was a young Serotine!



Jenny O'Neill



- Lots of droppings in the attic of the property
- Another Serotine from the same location was found a day later having flown into a window
- Jenny stayed and counted c.20 bats leaving the roost.
- Richard Crompton was informed and involved as he had been looking for the Serotine maternity roost in the area for years – it has finally been found and only the 3<sup>rd</sup> known for Wales!



Richard Crompton

Any questions?



He's all ears (pause for laughter)