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Immediate release

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Look out for East Devon batwoman!

Over the next few weeks there will be some additional nocturnal activity in the Branscombe and Shute areas. East Devon's very own bat woman will be radio tracking Greater Horseshoe bats as they fly through the countryside. Dr Fiona Mathews, University of Exeter and East Devon resident, is leading a team of volunteers who will attempt to find out more about the night time manoeuvres of these very rare bats.

The tracking exercise forms part of the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's Looking Out for Bats initiative. This is a three year landscape-scale project to discover more about the summer time movements of these bats. "By identifying those areas where they feed on insects and the hedgerows that they follow to get about, we can work with the surrounding landowners and fund enhancements which will improve the landscape for both people and the bats" said Pete Youngman, East Devon AONB. "Already we have undertaken over thirty farm bat surveys and nineteen farmers attended our first stewardship walk", he added.

How it works?

Radio tracking involves putting a miniscule transmitter on the bat's back which transmits a signal that allows them to be followed. This technology has in the past been used to follow rare birds of prey, dormice and even dolphins. The volunteers will be working in pairs as they follow roads, country lanes and footpaths to get a fix on the bats as they duck and dive between the hedges and woodland edges under the cover of darkness.

If you would like to find out more about this project or if you have bats in your barns or outbuildings and

would like to find out more about them then please contact Pete Youngman on 01404 46663.

How did this happen?

'Looking out for bats' is funded by SITA, with additional contributions from East Devon District Council, Devon County Council, Axe Vale and District Conservation Society and the Sid Vale Association. SITA Trust makes awards through the Landfill Communities Fund. SITA Trust provides funding to improve biodiversity and the environment around landfill sites throughout England. SITA Trust receives its funding from the waste management company, SITA UK.

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Notes for Editors

- **Image attached**
- The East Devon AONB was designated in 1963 and covers 268 sq km. Core funding and support is provided by Natural England, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council. Sixteen organisations from environmental groups to statutory bodies, landowners and community representatives work together through the AONB Partnership to conserve this protected landscape. www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk.
- **For information on how to apply for funding from SITA Trust call (01454) 262910 or click on www.sitatrust.org.uk**
SITA Trust
 - SITA Trust was set up in 1997 and runs three funding programmes:
 - o Enhancing Communities – for community improvement projects around landfill sites owned by SITA UK
 - o Enriching Nature – for biodiversity projects within the vicinity of landfill sites in England
 - o GreenPrints – launched in June 2007 to encourage 16-25 year olds to volunteer their time and energy to improving green spaces in their local communities
 - Each year, SITA Trust commits over £7 million nationwide through the Landfill Communities Fund