

**CYFOETH NATURIOL CYMRU  
NATURAL RESOURCES WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST: CITATION

**PEMBROKESHIRE**

**SCOVESTON FORT**

**Date of Notification:** 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**National Grid Reference:** SM944066

**O.S. Maps:** 1:50,000 Sheet number: 158  
1:25,000 Sheet number: OL36

**Site Area:** 6.35 hectares

**Description:**

Scoveston Fort is of special interest for its population of hibernating greater horseshoe bats *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*. It is situated approximately 2km north-west of the town of Neyland in Pembrokeshire.

The greater horseshoe bat has a predominantly southern Palaearctic distribution, and the Welsh population is at the extreme north-western edge of this species' range. The British population suffered a serious decline during the latter part of the Twentieth Century but now appears to be recovering; however, the Welsh breeding population is restricted to just 5 maternity roosts.

Scoveston Fort is a highly significant site for the greater horseshoe bat and is one of the largest hibernation sites for this species in Wales. This site has been monitored since 1975. Since 2005 it has consistently met and exceeded the qualifying SSSI criteria of 50 hibernating greater horseshoe bats.

The fort, which is uninhabitable for humans, comprises of a hexagonal building with each side 120m long, surrounded by a dry moat approximately 8m deep and 11m wide with stone-revetted escarpment walls. It has many separate structures within it that give a range of different roosting opportunities for greater horseshoe bats.

Winter grazing around the fort is of benefit to the greater horseshoe bats when they emerge to feed as it supports dung beetles and other invertebrates. The field to the south-west of the fort is likely a key foraging area, rich in invertebrates. Hedgerows leading away from the fort are important flight-lines and feeding corridors for the bats, which can be unwilling to cross open areas. The site and its surroundings are free from artificial lighting, so bats are able to forage unhindered.

The site occurs on free draining, slightly acid loamy soils. It is of Milford Haven Group bedrock – calcareous marls interbedded with sporadic sandstones; conglomerates and breccias are also present.

**Remarks:**

Scoveston Fort is a Grade II Listed Building and a Scheduled Monument.

Greater horseshoe bat is listed on Schedules 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Annex II and IVa of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (1992).

Scoveston Fort also functions as an important hibernation site for other bat species including lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, *Pipistrellus* spp. and *Myotis* spp.

The site has significant hazards including a deep well, underground reservoirs, rotten floor-boards, and flooded tunnels; and rescue access would be highly challenging for stretcher-bearers due to the dense scrub.