

Echo-location, location, location: my search for bats within urban Cambridge.

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¹*Project Echo*

In 2013 I participated in the NIWA science fair, studying birds in my backyard. I won several prizes including the DoC conservation award. For 2014 I decided to go bigger. At a Project Echo Bat open-day, I saw and heard bats in the wild for the first time and was enchanted by these amazing creatures. Hamilton and my home town of Cambridge are linked by the Waikato River, and I began to wonder whether, because of this natural 'highway', bats might be present in Cambridge. Instead of Googling it or asking someone, I decided to go out and see for myself.

After about a week of searching at dusk around Cambridge with a handheld bat detector, I finally confirmed my suspicions, locating one result next to Karapiro Stream. Instead of leaving it at that, I made this my 2014 School Science Fair project, centred on Cambridge and its environs.

Over one week using Automatic heterodyne Bat Recorders borrowed from the Department of Conservation I surveyed a number of different habitats around Cambridge, along several natural transects centred on the river and gullies. A number of locations were successful in locating bat echolocation, and feeding pulses, confirming the presence of bats in urban Cambridge.

I presented my findings to the 2014 NIWA Science Fair, winning overall runner-up and DoC Conservation Award and subsequently presenting to regional interest groups and local Government.