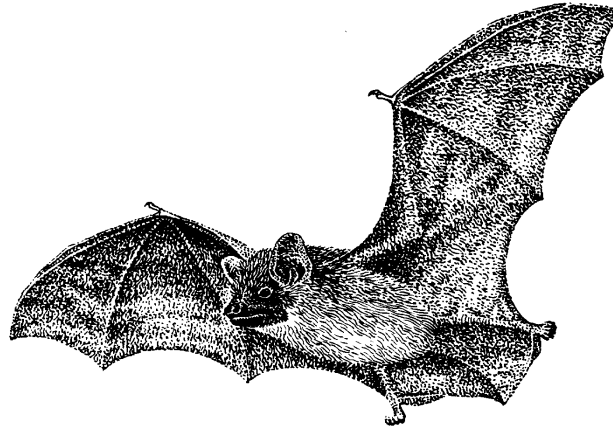


Pipistrelle Bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)

The Pipistrelle Bat is one of the smallest bats in Britain. It is most frequently seen just after sunset over open water and wet meadows, where it feeds on small insects caught in flight. Summer roosts and hibernating animals occur in confined spaces, such as roofs and occasionally trees.



1 Description

The common Pipistrelle is one of the smallest British bats, with a wingspan of about 20cms and weighing around 6 grams. It is now thought to be two separate species; *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*; distinguishable by their echo location calls and small differences in physical appearance.

Female bats form maternity roosts of upto several hundred adults from May, often in house roofs and give birth to a single young around July. These colonies, which may divide or move to other sites will disperse gradually once the young are flying and weaned. Males are much more solitary. Hibernation takes place from November to March in houses, barns and other structures. Pipistrelles forage for small insects in varied habitats but woodland edges, hedgerows and waterways are particularly important.

2 Current status

2.1 National

The most abundant and widespread bat species but thought to have declined by about 70% between 1978 and 1993. It is now considered that there two separate species of Pipistrelle Bat; *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and both are now regularly recorded throughout the county.

2.2 Local

The commonest bat in the county and both species of Pipistrelle are widespread. The national decline is likely to have been mirrored locally.

2.3 Natural Areas

All

3 Current factors affecting the Pipistrelle bat in Suffolk

- Reduction in insect prey abundance due to intensive farming practices and loss of wetlands, hedges and other suitable prey habitats.
- Loss of winter roosts in buildings, barns and old trees – often through human intervention.
- Barn conversions, renovations and modifications to other buildings such as fascia board replacement, roof repairs and flood lighting.

4 Current Action

Legal status

The Pipistrelle is protected under Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the EC Habitats and Species directive (Annex IV), the Bern Convention (Annex 3), the Conservation Regulations 1994 and is included in the Bonn Convention's Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe.

Management, research and guidance

- All known roosts are contained on the SBRC database which is updated on an annual basis and supplied to Local Authorities. Suffolk Bat Group also has a current copy.
- English Nature have engaged Suffolk Bat Group to undertake all practical work associated with bat conservation to enable EN to provide statutory advice to householders, developers, timber treatment companies.
- Suffolk Bat Group advises and deals with over 200 English Nature enquiries a year, additional public enquiries and gives 12-15 talks per year.
- Suffolk Bat Group in conjunction with English Nature has trained 5 new bat workers in the last 5 years.
- The species is a target for the National Bat Monitoring Programme being developed by the Bat Conservation Trust with funding from DETR.

4 Action plan objectives and targets

- 1. Maintain existing populations and range*
- 2. Achieve significant restoration of the Suffolk population s to pre-1970 numbers*
- 3. Aim to reduce the incidence of damage to Pipistrelle roosts caused during building works / re-development work and road improvement schemes*
- 4. Develop monitoring procedures that will indicate likely causes of population change*

6 Pipistrelle Bat: Proposed action with lead agencies

Action	Date	Partners
POLICY AND LEGISLATION		
Seek to improve water quality levels through LEAPs to support aquatic insects on which Pipistrelles feed.	On-going	EA
Ensure that planning process picks up known Pipistrelle roosts and where permission is granted, these roosts are safeguarded during building works/development.	On-going	SWT, LAs, SBG
Promote Defra agri-environment schemes that will support the creation of hedges, ponds and other suitable farmland habitats.	On-going	FWAG, SWT
SITE SAFEGUARD AND MANAGEMENT		
Identify and protect known roost sites by updating roost site records on an annual basis.	On-going	SBG, EN, LAs, SBRC
Encourage leaving of dead and dying trees wherever appropriate.	On-going	FWAG, SWT, LAs, Defra
Promote wildlife gardening, as gardens are important food sources in both urban and rural areas.	On-going	SWT
SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION		
Ensure continued support for conservation work of Suffolk Bat Group.	2007	EN, SWT
RESEARCH AND MONITORING		
Contribute to national initiatives for population assessment and monitoring, linking population changes to environmental factors.	2007	SBG, EN
Ensure data collected during site visits and surveys is passed on to SBRC for central collation.	On-going	EN, SWT, SBG, FE, LAs
ADVISORY		
Liaise with landowners and land managers of Pipistrelle sites to ensure appropriate management of sites and surrounding habitats. Distribute relevant literature.	On-going	EN, SWT, SBG, FE, LAs, FWAG

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY		
Distribute guidance leaflet on habitat management for Pipistrelle Bats in Suffolk.	On-going	EN, SWT, SBG, FE, LAs, FWAG
Maintain current numbers of licensed bat workers and encourage additional volunteers to train to ensure adequate county coverage in the future.	On-going	EN, SBG
Maintain and improve advisory system through education, training and publicity programmes.	On-going	SBG, SWT, EN, FWAG