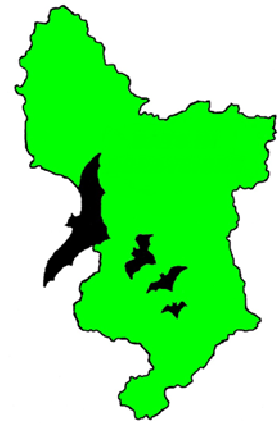


TRAGUS



Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group Annual Report

2008

Number 30

COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS



The 2008 Annual General Meeting of the Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group was held at the White Hart, Duffield on Thursday 6th November 2008. Following the election of committee members the committee is made up as follows:

Name	Committee status	Position
Alan Wragg	Member	Chairperson
Jim Alder	Member	Vice-chair
Jenny Wheeldon	Member	Treasurer
Sue Crookes	Member	Membership secretary
Emma Flatt	Member	Events secretary
Emma Gregson	Co-opted member	Minutes secretary
Alan Roe	Member	Newsletter editor
Garry Gray	Co-opted member	Technical officer
Malcolm Hopton	Member	Recorder
Pete Bush	Member	
Debbie Worland	Co-opted member	
Sarah Ross	Co-opted member	

Thank you to all committee members, past and present, for accepting nomination and for the help they have given to bat conservation.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES



Once again it was agreed to retain the current subscription rates of £5.00 renewal and £6.50 for new members for another year.

MONTHLY MEETINGS



Monthly meetings of the group are normally held on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30pm. The venue is usually the upstairs meeting rooms of either The White Hart, Duffield - NGR: SK344433 or the Cromford Community Centre - NGR: SK295569. All members are welcome to attend. You can now check the venue at derbyshirebats.org.uk and click 'Group Meetings'.

MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS



In 2008 the group had a total of 57 paying members compared to 56 in 2007. However the recent welcome increase in the number of active members continues.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



It has been an eventful year, similar to 2007 with regard to the appalling weather and high numbers of grounded bats. Notable events have been the finding of another pip roost in Thulston (708 bats); a second count of the Chatsworth Leisler's roost (147 bats); continued monitoring of the Baslow Daubenton's roost following work on the church entrance (numbers comparable to 2004); and the detection of Southwood and Kedleston barbastelles, which we hope to confirm by mist netting next season.

Turn outs at meetings and field events have been excellent and the team effort has never been better. More of the same for next year but better weather please!

Alan Wragg, Chair.

SPECIES REPORT



Next year will be my 20th year in bat conservation and in trying times when snowed under with bat issues, one can think "I'd have got less for manslaughter". However despite another appalling summer I can't recall a more challenging time with lots of interesting survey work telling us more about where bat populations are. The purchase of two Anabats during the year has given us big indications as to bat numbers and distribution, although little firm evidence of Barbastelle. It has however shown us two likely Nathusius records in Kedleston and Calke (although the latter was just

in Leicestershire). Disappointingly, a very poor year for serotine. However some significant roosts have been found, mainly concerning soprano pipistrelle. The Leisler's colony count is in its second year and is bigger than we thought and there are encouraging roost trends in Daubenton's and brown long-eared bats. Finally, a breakthrough with the obviously under recorded Brandt's bat. One found on 10th May near the Staffordshire border close to a previous record south-west of Coton-in-the-Elms was the tenth for Derbyshire. But by the autumn further likely Brandt's were found in Derbyshire during the first part of the winter (see species breakdown).

Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*



Always plenty to report on this species. DW and JA organised the regular counts at Baslow church with many helpers and the maximum count was 319 on 20th July. Hibernation records seem to reveal it to be the least common *Myotis* in the Via Gellia. Only 3 out of 37 *Myotis* identified were thought to be this species. Two dead bats from Baslow church roost were sent for rabies testing by GG on the 3rd September, something which continues to be done by the group. A grounded juvenile female was found at Bemrose school in Derby on the 17th November (AW). This is very close to a small colony known to have existed at Derby City Hospital.

Whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*

Just how many roosts of this species must we miss? Winter records included 3 at Foxhole 16th January (JA, PB and PM). Thirteen likely whiskered found during winter included 10 at Jacobs Dream on the 2nd February (SC, JW and AR). Twenty were considered whiskered/Brandt's during hibernation counts. Use of the Anabat near Wicket Nook (Calke Estate) during June indicated lots of *Myotis* activity close to the site of a roost first discovered in 1988 (SR, AR). The roof space is known to be stuffed full of droppings! Grounded bats included a grounded juvenile female on 7th August (GG), 17th September a juvenile (GG), a female released from Ashbourne on 8th September was OK (DB) and an adult female seemed to be flying strongly in Derby market hall but then landed on a traders jumper and then died the next day, 15th August (AW).



Brandt's Bat *Myotis brandtii*



A milestone year for this species, due largely to the hibernation surveys carried out by JA. However the 10th record was confirmed near Coton-in-the-Elms close to a previous record, a male which was picked up on the 10th May (CGry and GGry). Sadly it died by the 14th. Later in the year an 11th record was confirmed in Silver Eye mine on 2nd December (JA). Watch this space.

Natterer's Bat *Myotis nattereri*

A good spread of records all year round and county wide. A bat regarded as rare in Derbyshire by Roy Branson in 1988. Ticknall lime yards revealed 2 on 10th February during a bat group survey (BC et al). Also 2 at Spinney Level on 4th September (JA, PB). A magnificent count of 31 bats at the Via Gellia on 21st February included this species (PB, JA). The Youlgreave roost was surveyed into late summer. GG decided to extend into August past the NBMP study period. 28 were counted out on the 11th August some of which were considered to be pips. Previous maximum was 8 on 4th July. Once of the most spectacular sights of the year was a cluster of 11 in a woodcrete box found by an astonished Nick Barnes at Hilton. A female was processed, the forearm was 39 mm and the weight was 9.5 gms.



Serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*



A very poor year for this species. The hot spot Calke only had 1 during a bat walk on 30th May (AW, EG et al). An unconfirmed possible record however came from Lancashire bat worker Stan Irwin whilst working as a consultant in Chesterfield. This was from sonogram analysis.

Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*

The large woodcrete bat box at Carsington didn't disappoint, with 11 found on the 9th March. Two males were processed forearms/weights were 52 mm/27 gms and 49.5 mm/23.5 gms (BC, AR et al). Also seen at Whitwell 22nd September and Ogston, one on the 12th October (AW et al) during the bat box checks. There was no evidence of usage from the two historical well used roosts at Elvaston Castle County Park but plenty of activity on the estate (AW). Frequently encountered on bat walks and transects such as Calke, Staunton Harold Reservoir and Stoney Clouds.



Leisler's Bat *Nyctalus leisleri*

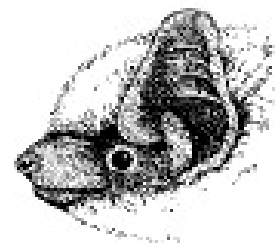


A very encouraging year. Chatsworth farm shop had a grounded baby on the 30th June (GG). The second annual count made on 16th July realised 149 bats by 21.35, just before the rain arrived (AW, SR MM et al). The reliable Whitwell bat box check had small numbers; one on the 4th May had a forearm of 42 mm and was 6 gms. Two were also found at Whitwell on the 22nd September (JA et al), also one at Elvaston bat box check on 7th December (AW, AR et al).

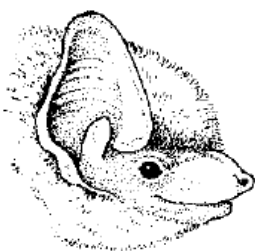


Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

The debate has started as to whether this is the commoner of the two phenotypes. Certainly the only pipistrelles you see in bat boxes are soprano but grounded and more “urban” pips are common. The first grounded pip was reported from New Whittington, Chesterfield on 23rd June, probably only 1 day old it died (GG). A bit of a rush of bat calls started on the 28th June with babies coming into a house at Belper (AW). A second bad summer meant more horror stories, prolonged births into July. Nine baby bats had been deserted at Swadlincote on the 7th July and were taken into care by Sylvia Ellis of North Notts. bat group. Only fourteen were positively identified as common during bat box checks in Derbyshire during the year.



Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*



A milestone year for this species. On the 16th July an anxious householder reported a contaminated water supply which had gone on for six days. On inspection in the roof 9 dead bats were found in the water tank which was uncovered. AW and BC made good repairs that evening and remained for a bat count which resulted in 708 bats making this the largest count of bats since 2002 in Doveridge - 1,105 which were found on the 15th June by Tony Taylor.

Two more counts were made and plans were put in place for a prolonged study in 2009. This was the most common species found in bat box checks in 2008. 89 were found in the long standing roost at Newton Solney which had 446 as a maximum on the 4th June (Chris Bond).



Soprano pipistrelles, Elvaston 7th December 2008

Nathusius' Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*

At last, with nothing nathusii to report in 2007, Anabat footage showed pipistrelle peak energy at 39 kHz, well within Jon Russ's criteria, again at Kedleston in mid June (GGry) and a clearer signal on 25th August near the old school house (GGry). South Wood too had a likely Anabat recording on 27th September (SR) but sadly this was just over the Leicestershire border. A good encounter was made in real time just in to Nottinghamshire at Attenborough. While talking a few bat passes were noted on heterodyne by JW and AW on the 18th September. Both minidisk and MP3 footage confirmed this species. The site is close to the Long Eaton grounded bat of 2004. This bat must be under recorded. Jon Russ recommends surveying reservoir bays and large gravel pits. Is this bat a resident and/or a vagrant? Discuss.



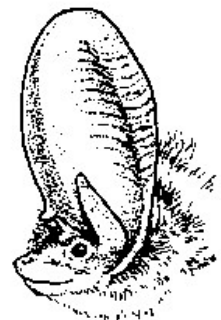
Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*



Following possible bat detector records in 2007 from Calke and Kedleston fairly rigorous surveys were undertaken at both these sites. The first lead came from South Wood on 20th June then on 27th June (AR and SR). The first was heard and seen on analysis, the second was heard in real time. The experts at BCT were divided as to the identifications of the calls. Poor summer weather meant no more breakthroughs until September at Kedleston, between 15th September and 9th October 3 nights in total and all in Hay Wood (GGry, AW and EG). All were made using frequency division onto minidisk or MP3 player. Firm evidence can only be obtained however from a hand record. A more typical Barb-type two part call on a time expansion detector would be helpful. Projects in summer 2009 should be more conclusive but as it stands the status of Barbastelle is "probable and thought to be present".

Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*

Widespread and often encountered. 16 were found in bat boxes, the hot spot being Ogston with 12 on the 12th October. The nationally important Idridgehay roost realised only 116 on the 16th June (DW et al). Over a hundred down on last year, an exceptionally low 5 °C could have meant some no shows. BC recorded lower counts too on the Calke estate. Winter counts: 1 at Spinney level 4th January (JA, PB); 2 at Groaning Tor for the NBMP count 2nd February (SC, JW, AR); 1 at Ticknall lime yards 10th February (BC, AR, GGry et al). Quiet on the grounded bat front in the north- east, a juvenile male was collected from Old Tupton, Chesterfield on 10th September (GG). Despite eating 43 mealworms in 3 nights the bat had sustained a broken wing and had to be put to sleep. As was a male recovered from Dronfield Woodhouse on 15th September (GG).



Alan Wragg

Thanks to: Jim Alder, Nick Barnes, David Bonser, Pete Bush, Bill Cove, Sue Crookes, Geoff Garratt (GG), Clare Gray (CGry), Garry Gray (GGry), Emma Gregson, Marian MacKinnon, Paul Mortimer, Alan Roe, Steve Roe, Jenny Wheeldon, Debbie Worland, Alan Wragg.

BAT BOX RECORDS



A summary of results for each scheme in 2008 is given below.

Bat Box Scheme	N ^o of boxes checked	Total N ^o of bats	% Occupation	% Usage
Broadhurst	40	1	3	10
Brockholes	20	0	0	40
Calke	59	23	12	24
Carsington	48	15	13	28
Elvaston	58	26	27	62
Hilton	42	12	5	42
Long Clough	17	2	12	29
Ogston	58	17	14	55
South Wood	50	11	8	32
Spring Wood	28	13	11	64
Whitwell - spring	56	17	21	41
Whitwell - autumn	56	18	19	45

Occupation = boxes containing bats, usage = boxes containing bats or droppings.

Six species using our schemes with a total of 155 bats found in boxes in 2008.



All photos
Alan Roe

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Thanks to everyone mentioned in this publication that helped with Bat Conservation in Derbyshire throughout 2008. Apologies and thanks to anyone not mentioned. Without your help a lot of things would not be possible.