

PIPISTRELLE BAT

Pipistrellus pipistrellus

Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Pipistrelle bat has been identified by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group as a species that requires conservation action, and it is on the priority list of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. A species action plan for Pipistrelle bat was published as part of Tranche 1 of UK action plans in *Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report*, Volume 2 (page 89).

The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership has identified the Pipistrelle as a species requiring action in Hampshire.

2 CURRENT STATUS

2.1 Ecology and Habitat Requirements

The basic requirements of the Pipistrelle bat are common to all temperate bat species. These include the need for breeding, hibernating and mating roosts, as well as feeding areas. The Pipistrelle's principal roost sites are buildings, with trees being used to a lesser extent. Pipistrelles are highly social and nomadic animals requiring a large number of suitable roosts to maintain each colony. Pipistrelles use a mosaic of habitat types for feeding. Wetlands, however, are particularly important and access to these areas from their roosting sites is especially significant.

2.2 Population and Distribution

Although it remains the most abundant and widespread bat species in the UK, the Pipistrelle is thought to have undergone a significant decline this century. Estimates from the 'National Bat Colony Survey' suggest a population decline of approximately 70% between 1978 and 1993. The current immature population estimate for the UK stands at approximately 2,000,000¹.

The problems of estimating populations trends have been compounded by the recent discovery that there are two distinct species of Pipistrelle bat in the UK – '45' and '55' Pipistrelles – based on the frequency at which they echolocate.

2.3 Important Sites

There are 150 known breeding roosts in Hampshire. Of these 28 have been verified as either '45' or '55' Pipistrelles. The strongholds in the county are the Avon Valley, Test Valley and New Forest.

2.4 Protection

The Pipistrelle is listed on Appendix III of the Bern Convention, Annex IV of the EC Habitats & Species Directive and Appendix II of the Bonn Convention (and is included under the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe). It is protected under Schedules 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

3 CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING PIPISTRELLE BAT

- Reduction in insect prey abundance, due to high intensity farming practices and inappropriate riparian management such as spraying with herbicides/insecticides.
- Loss of insect-rich feeding habitats and flyways, due to loss of wetlands, hedgerows and other suitable prey habitats.
- Loss of winter roosting sites in buildings and old trees through development and 'tidying up' of the countryside.
- Disturbance and destruction of roosts, including the loss of maternity roosts due to the use of toxic timber treatment chemicals.

4 CURRENT ACTION

4.1 National

- The Joint Nature Conservation Commission (JNCC) commissioned a National Bat Habitat Survey in 1994, which provided much information on habitat preference and distribution.
- The Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR) has commissioned a National Bat Monitoring

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Programme (NBMP) managed by the Bat Conservation Trust, which includes both species of Pipistrelle.

- The National Bat Colony Survey has monitored many Pipistrelle roosts since 1978 on the basis of annual summer roost counts.
- A large amount of research has been undertaken, investigating reproductive physiology, mating strategies, field activity, and the morphology and ecology of the two Pipistrelle species by investigation of echolocation calls and mitochondrial DNA.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) have developed design briefs for the conservation of Pipistrelle roosts in houses.

to roosts in building and trees, and offer advice as required under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

- Publicity events relating to bats are organised by HBG annually.
- Training of bat workers is carried out by EN with support from the HBG.
- A number of monitoring projects within Hampshire is undertaken by the HBG and EN, as well as assisting with fieldwork for the National Bat Monitoring Programme.
- Bat detector workshops are undertaken annually to identify Pipistrelle roosts, feeding areas and flight lines.

4.2 Local

- English Nature and the Hampshire Bat Group (HBG) continue to undertake bat visits

5 OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this Plan is to protect and increase the distribution and population of Pipistrelle bats in Hampshire. This broad aim translates into a set of more specific objectives as detailed below. Where feasible, objectives have been allocated targets against which achievement can be measured. The objectives have been broken down into more detailed actions in the 'Proposed Action' table in section 6.

	OBJECTIVES	PROPOSED ACTIONS
A	Maintain existing populations and range of Pipistrelle bats in Hampshire.	1-9, 11, 13, 16-21
B	Achieve a significant restoration of the Hampshire Pipistrelle bat population.	1-5, 8, 16-21
C	Assist in the development of monitoring procedures for the identification of population trends nationally and in Hampshire.	9-14, 18
D	Promote communication, education and awareness of the status and needs of Pipistrelle bats.	3, 8-11, 13, 15-21

6 PROPOSED ACTION

The following table lists the actions required to achieve the objectives set out in this Plan. Each action has been assigned to one or more 'Key Partners'. Key Partners are those organisations that are expected to take responsibility for the delivery of the actions assigned to them, according to the targets set in this Plan. Other organisations may also be involved in the delivery of action, and they have been indicated in the 'Others' column.

Key to symbols in Action Table:

- ◆ To be completed by the indicated year. Work can commence at any time before the due date, at the discretion of the Key Partner.
- ◆⇨ Design or production of a plan/strategy to be completed by this year and then followed by its implementation.
- To start by the indicated year and usually followed by ongoing work. A start arrow in year 2000 can indicate a new action or a new impetus to existing work.
- ⇨ Work that has already begun and is ongoing.

	ACTION	DELIVERY BY		YEAR						MEETS OBJ.	
		Key Partner	Others	◆=complete by	◆⇨=design by and implement	➤=start by	⇨=ongoing	2000	2001		2002
Site and Species Policy and Protection											
1	Strive to achieve high standards of water quality to favour good populations of aquatic insects.	EA	EN, HWT	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	A, B
2	Ensure that the needs of the Pipistrelle bat are included in land management incentive schemes.	FC, MAFF/FRCA	FWAG, EN, HMAP			◆					A, B
3	Ensure that the needs of the Pipistrelle bat are fully considered in local development plans and policies.	LA's, EN	HBG, HWT			◆					A, B, D
4	Review and assess the effectiveness of current management and protection policies/advice, and amend where necessary.	EN, BCT	HBG, LAs		◆						A, B
Site and Species Management											
5	Encourage favourable management of land adjacent to breeding sites to benefit foraging bats.	EN, HWT	EA, FC, MAFF/FRCA, HBG, FWAG, HMAP			◆					A, B
6	Ensure that development schemes do not affect the integrity of roost sites.	LA's, EN, EC's	HBG, HWT	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	A

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	ACTION	DELIVERY BY		YEAR						MEETS OBJ.	
		Key Partner	Others	◆=complete by	◆⇔=design by and implement	⇨=start by	⇔=ongoing	2000	2001		2002
Site and Species Management (continued)											
7	Ensure that roosts are maintained or reinstated after building/tree work.	EN, HBG	BCT	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	A
8	Seek to encourage landowners to take up beneficial land management schemes (e.g. Countryside Stewardship Scheme; ESA Scheme; Woodland Grant Scheme) for sites occupied by Pipistrelle bats and on adjacent land	EN	FA, MAFF/FRCA, FWAG, HMAP	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	A, B, D
Research, Survey and Monitoring											
9	Develop and maintain a database for the collation of Pipistrelle records in Hampshire.	HMR	EN, HBG, HWT, HCC	◆⇔							A, C, D
10	Ensure records are fed to relevant national and local biological databases.	EN, HMR	HBG, HWT, HCC	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	C, D
11	Collate all records of Pipistrelle bats and identify important roosts to pursue other actions.	HMR, EN, HBG	HWT, HCC		◆						A, C, D
12	Continue to assist the NBMP in developing standard monitoring techniques to identify population changes.	EN, HBG	BCT, NBMP		◆						C
13	Implement standard monitoring techniques to identify population changes at important roosts in Hampshire.	EN, HBG	BCT, NBMP		⇨						A, C, D
14	Identify roosts of the two species of Pipistrelle, using specialist bat detectors.	EN, HBG, SCH	NBMP, BCT					◆			C
Communication, Awareness and Promotion											
15	Maintain closely supervised roost visiting, general education and publicity.	EN, HBG	HWT, BCT	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	D
16	Ensure Pipistrelle requirements are incorporated within local Habitat Action Plans as appropriate.	EN, HWT, HCC	HBP	◆							A, B, D
17	Ensure that advice is available to the public, landowners and organisations on the legal and conservation status of the Pipistrelle bat, and that	EN, HWT,	LA's, BCT, MAFF/ FRCA, FC	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	A, B, D

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	advice on the management of land and roosts is freely available.	HBG	FC							
18	Continue to support the Hampshire Bat Group and its activities.	EN, HWT, BCT	HBG	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	A, B, C, D
19	Develop and produce specific guidance on Pipistrelle bats for developers and planning authorities.	EN, HBG, BCT	HWT		◆					A, B, D
20	Maintain current licensing procedures for bat workers; recruit and train to maintain a level of three licensed bat workers per local authority area.	EN, HBG	BCT, HWT, BTCV				◆			A, B, D
21	Ensure that at least 50% of 'Police Wildlife Liaison Officers' receive training relating to bats.	EN, HBG	BCT		◆					A, B, D

KEY TO ORGANISATIONS:

BCT Bat Conservation Trust
 BTCV British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
 EA Environment Agency
 EN English Nature
 FA Forestry Authority
 FC Forestry Commission
 FRCA Farming and Rural Conservation Agency
 FWAG Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
 HBG Hampshire Bat Group

HBP Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership
 HCC Hampshire County Council
 HMAP Hampshire Management Advisory Project
 HMR Hampshire Mammal Recorders
 HWT Hampshire Wildlife Trust
 LAs Local Authorities
 MAFF Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
 NBMP National Bat Monitoring Programme
 SCH Sparsholt College Hampshire



REFERENCES

- 1 ***A Review of British Mammals: Population estimates and conservation status of British mammals other than Cetaceans***, S Harris et al., JNCC, Peterborough, 1995.

SPECIES ACTION PLAN

This is one of many Habitat, Species and Topic Action Plans being prepared by the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership. It will be monitored by the Partnership and fully reviewed in 2004.

This species action plan has been prepared by Ian Davidson-Watts and the Pipistrelle Bat SAP Working Group on behalf of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership.

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