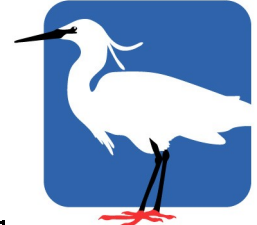




Common pipistrelle © Lisa Redford

**Tees Valley
Biodiversity
Partnership**



Bats (all species)
Species Action Plan
2010-2014

Plan Lead Organisation	Durham & North Yorkshire Bat Groups
Plan Coordinator	Ian Bond
Action Group	All
Associated Plans	Broadleaved woodland; rivers & streams; ponds & lakes; cemeteries; parks and amenity areas; gardens and allotments
Latest version	Published Jan 2010

Description

Bats are treated in this LBAP as a group as all British species share many features of their behaviour and ecology and are subject to similar threats. From the point of view of conservation actions, perhaps the most significant difference within the group is between Pipistrelle bats and the other species. Pipistrelle bats, particularly common pipistrelles, are regularly found in relatively modern buildings; they will utilise very urban areas and will move roost quite frequently throughout the year. They are also much more of a habitat generalist than other British bat species and it is likely that they could be found in almost any location in the Tees Valley that has some trees, bushes, water or other natural habitats. The other bat species tend to roost in traditional buildings, bridges or trees and tend to be more roost faithful (an exception being noctules, that roost almost exclusively in trees and tend to move roost regularly) and they are less frequently encountered in the more urban areas.

All British bats feed only on arthropods, particularly flying insects. Most species feed around trees or hedgerows, with some species requiring mature woodland, while others make do with scatterings of trees in parks or gardens. Some species prefer riparian habitats with Daubenton's bats being a particular specialist in this respect. When bats are flying to their feeding areas they usually follow natural features in the landscape such as hedgerows, tree lines or watercourses, therefore it is important for them that this network is retained. Bats typically travel from 0.5-10km from their roosts, depending on the species, and disperse widely across the landscape, seldom forming large feeding aggregations. Consequently they require habitat improvements at a landscape scale.

Protecting traditional roosts is vitally important for the survival of local populations of bats; hence bat roosts as well as bats themselves are protected by law. Bats generally roost colonially, particularly the females when giving birth. Their reproductive rate is slow with each female only giving birth to one young per year. Their slow reproductive rate, allied to their habit of roosting colonially, makes them vulnerable to catastrophic effects such as roost destruction or concentrated predation. Research on the size of bat populations is still a fairly recent development, but it is thought that the numbers of pipistrelles declined by around a half between roughly 1970 and 1990. Other bat species are likely to have followed a similar trend. Following an increase in legal protection in the 1980s and '90s the numbers, nationally, of some bat species, have started to creep up again. It is likely that, for certain species, numbers will still be below the carrying capacity of the available habitat and for those species it may be other factors that are limiting the population.

Current factors causing loss and decline

It is likely that roosts are still destroyed both inadvertently and deliberately and this has the potential to devastate bat populations.

There is concern and anecdotal evidence about a reduction in the numbers of insects; if so, this will limit the numbers of all bat species.

The reduction in the number of potential roosting sites, as buildings are increasingly better sealed, is likely to impact on pipistrelle bats although it is not known if this is currently a limiting factor.

Reduction in connectivity between habitats could reduce the foraging opportunities for bats. Also if there are no roosting opportunities nearby then it is possible that some otherwise suitable habitat may be unavailable to the less mobile species of bat.

Conservation Status

Bern Convention, Appendix III, EC Habitats Directive, Annex IV. Bonn Convention, Appendix II Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994, Regulation 38

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Schedules 5 and 6.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan Species – brown long eared, noctule & soprano pipistrelle

The species in the Tees Valley

At least nine of the 16 species of bat that breed in Britain are found in Cleveland. Of these the common pipistrelle is by far the commonest and probably makes up at least 90% of the total numbers of bats in the sub-region. It is also the most ubiquitous and can be found almost anywhere. The other species are: Daubenton's, brown long eared, noctule, natterer's, soprano pipistrelle, whiskered, Brandt's, nathusius' pipistrelle. Each of the last five of these species has so far only been recorded from five or less locations in Cleveland. Daubenton's bats can be found over most suitable water bodies but brown long eared and noctule appear to be much more localised in their distribution.

Until recently, Cleveland has tended to be on the periphery of both Durham and North Yorkshire bat groups and therefore relatively little is known about the state of bats in the area. There is no data on the trends of bat numbers in Cleveland, though several known roosts of some of the less common species appear to have declined to extinction. It is likely that the numbers of common pipistrelles and Daubenton's bats are increasing in line with the national trend. This may be because of improvements to available habitat; an increase in the amount of young woodland plantation in the case of pipistrelles, with an improvement in water quality potentially contributing to the increase in Daubenton's. The most crucial deliverable action, is probably the provision of suitable roosting opportunities and increased protection of existing roosts; the latter includes protection from disturbance, for example, by inappropriate lighting. In order to do this it is essential to find the locations of roosts and to further promote the legal protection of roosts. Giving more people the opportunity to get involved with bat work will facilitate this process and help with the general promotion of bats. Other factors, such as increasing insect populations, or large-scale habitat change, are beyond the scope of the LBAP process, but small scale habitat improvements, particularly improving connectivity, would be useful if particular sites are identified.

Current Activity in the Tees Valley

Durham Bat Group and North Yorkshire Bat Group provide advice to householders about bats on behalf of Natural England, north and south of the Tees respectively.

Bat walks take place in several locations each year to promote bats and inform people about them.

A Tees Valley Bats newsletter has been produced 3 times per year for several years.

A programme of activities to involve more people in bat-related activities was commenced in 2009 as a partnership between Durham and North York bats groups and Tees Valley Wildlife Trust.

Further Information

Mitchell-Jones, T & McLeish, A.P. (2004) Bat Workers, JNCC

Richardson, P (2000), British Natural History Series: Bats Whittet Books Ltd

Parsons, K. et al (2007). Bat Surveys. Good Practice Guidelines. Bat Conservation Trust

Mitchell-Jones, T. (2007). Focus on bats; discovering their lifestyle and habitats. Natural England

Websites

Durham Bat Group

North Yorkshire Bat Group

Bat Conservation Trust

Natural England - advice and legislation relating to bats

www.durhambats.org.uk

www.nybats.org.uk/index.htm

www.bats.org.uk

www.naturalengland.org.uk

Vision Statement

To achieve a greater understanding of bat species distribution and their conservation needs and for this to be translated into conservation actions, particularly ensuring roosting sites are protected and created.

Targets

No numerical targets have been set for practical reasons of quantifying.

Actions

Code	Action	Organisational lead	Action contact	Partners	End date
B.A1	Contact traditionally built churches & cemetery chapels across Tees Valley to see if they have bats & to provide advice	Durham Bat Group	Jonathan Pounder	NYBG; TVWT	2014
B.A2	Collate all bat records from past planning applications	North East regional records centre (ERIC)	Katherine Pinnock	LAs	2011
B.A3	Survey 2 new sites per year for bats	Durham & North Yorks Bat Groups	Ian Bond		Annually
B.A4	Create ten additional (ie not mitigation for lost roosts), substantial bat roosting opportunities ie potential hibernation or maternity roosts. (NB if bat boxes, at least 3 non-softwood boxes per site)	Stockton Borough Council countryside section	Terry Douthwaite	HBC; MBC; R&CBC	2014
B.A5	Run 6 bat walks per year	Durham & North Yorks Bat Groups	Ian Bond	TVWT	Annually
B.A6	Provide training course in NBMP techniques	Bat Conservation Trust	Ian Bond	TVWT	2011
B.A7	Establish NBMP surveys at 15 sites across Tees Valley	Durham Bat Group	Ian Bond	NYBG; BCT; TVWT	2014
B.A8	Carry out research into the success of various types, arrangement and location of bat boxes in the Tees Valley	TVWT	Kenny Crooks	BCT; DBG; NYBG	2014