



Issue Six – Autumn 2013

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Bat Care Round-up

Meet the new committee:

Chair - Michael Walker *
Treasurer – Paul Stone *
Membership – Ruth Testa
Minutes – Rosamund Aubrey
Events – Matt Cook *
Bat Care – Lynn Victor and Rebecca Dicks
Newsletters - Michael Walker * and Matt Cook
Data & Info – Michael Walker *, Chris Turner and Phil Carter
 (* pre-existing role)

2013 Nathusius' Pip Records

Attenborough Nature Reserve
Bat Detector Records (five)
 20 May, 31 May, 19 July, 9 / 10 Aug

Bat Boxes (twice)
 7 Sept - 1 bat
 15 Sept - 2 bats (1m, 1f)

Skylarks Nature Reserve, Holme Pierrepont
Bat Detector Records (two)
 13 June, 16 Sept – NEW SITE

Burton Meadows, Burton Joyce
Bat Detector Record (one)
 29 Aug - NEW SITE

Netherfield Lagoons
Bat Detector Record (one)
 31 Aug - NEW SITE

Wollaton Park
Bat Detector Record (one)
 26 Sept – NEW SITE

Nottingham University, Highfields
Bat Detector Record (one)
 20 Sept

Hello!

..... and welcome to the latest edition of the newsletter of **Nottinghamshire Bat Group**. It's been quite an exciting time for the group over the last couple of months, and you'll probably notice a nod as to the main reason why. Yep, Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) has recently been confirmed as a breeding bat species within the county. Michael Walker, our Chair, talks us through the captivating discovery of 'Nathusi' at Attenborough Nature Reserve this September.

It's also been quite exciting though because we've recently taken some important steps forward in an attempt to share the ever increasing workload from a few overstretched members and progress the group for everyone. We now have a 'preliminary' committee in place following an excellent meeting in September (thanks to all those who came and contributed) with a view to formally adopting these roles at the next AGM; these 'committee' members already seem to be excelling in their respective roles. A constitution is also being carefully drafted and new and updated protocols and practices are being established for our bat care, surveys, data analysis, projects, and publications.

With specific regard to the latter we'll now be publishing a newsletter more regularly, on a quarterly basis; all paid-up members can expect a new edition every Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. So now that the dark, cold, bat-free nights are here for a bit, sit back and have a good read about (mostly) Nottinghamshire bats ☺

Nottinghamshire Bat Group, November 2013

The Year of the Nathusius' Bat

Following the excitement in 2011 when we recorded barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*) for the first time in the county, the following summers have been much quieter with no other barbastelle bats (more on them elsewhere in this newsletter) or new species since. What was very interesting though was the increase in numbers of Nathusius' pipistrelle recorded at Attenborough Nature Reserve (NR).

Recorded there for the first time in 2006, Nathusius' pipistrelle has been recorded every year since with the exception of 2008. All the records up until last year have come from the spring or late summer / early autumn - the peak time for Nathusius' pipistrelle migration.

However, in 2012 one was recorded on 7 July which started us thinking that we may have more than migrating bats

passing through; perhaps we may even have a roost somewhere nearby? We do have a record from mid August (2009) but this could have been the start of the autumn movement and may not have been a bat around for the summer.

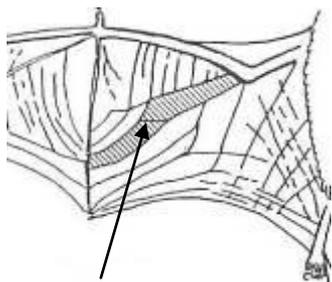
Records from 2012 from near Newark have also recently come to light as part of a planning application - Nathusius' pips were recorded there in May, June, August and September so potentially another area where a bat or two remained during the summer. The only other summer records we have are from Holme Pierrepont in 2009



Photo: Tim Sexton, Notts Wildlife Trust



Photo: Michael Walker
The Schwegler 1FF bat box on the south-west facing wall at the rear of Attenborough Nature Reserve Visitor Centre.



This line of collagen is *usually* present on Nathusius' pipistrelle but not on common and soprano pipistrelles.

This line can just about be seen (among the creases in the wing membrane) on this picture (below) of the female bat found at Attenborough NR in September.

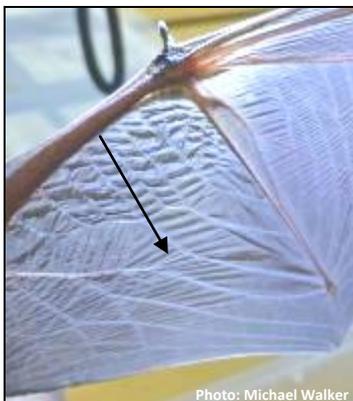


Photo: Michael Walker

The length of the 5th digit (including wrist) should also be longer than 42 mm (excluding wrist) and more than 1.25 x forearm length.



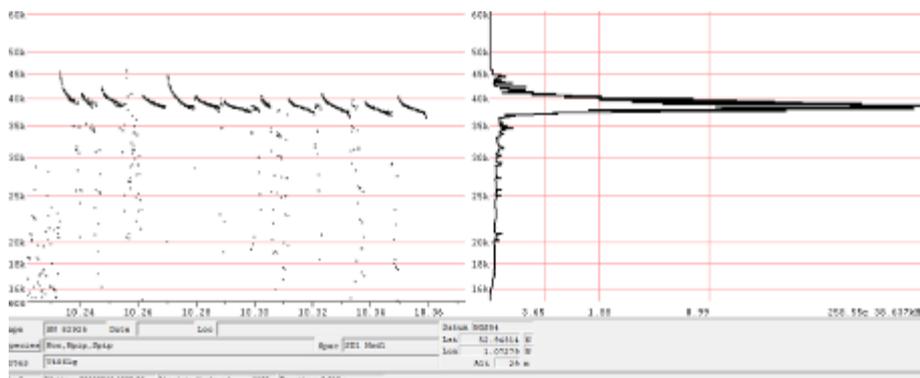
Photo: Michael Walker

The first upper premolar (P3) in Nathusius' pipistrelle lies in the tooth row and is visible here. On our other pipistrelle species it is set inside the tooth row and usually only the point is visible as shown by the drawing below.

when a singing male was recorded on 9 June followed by another (not singing this time though) on 3 July. This area was also to feature in our 2013 records.

2013

This year we recorded Nathusius' pipistrelle at four new locations and three in places where they have been previously recorded (see details opposite). Summer records from Attenborough reinforced our suspicions of a local population; a record in June from Holme Pierrepont, very close to the 2009 location, added to the excitement. The Holme Pierrepont records came from the new part of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust's Skylarks nature reserve. This new section known for many years by local birdwatchers as Blott's Pit has also proven to be an excellent place for bats, with good numbers of noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), Myotis bats including Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*), and all three species of Pipistrelle. In September, one area was particularly active for Nathusius' with what seemed to me to be too many calls for a single bat (if it was just one bat then it was very busy - see call example in AnalookW below).



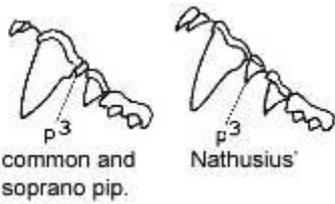
The Mating Roost

On the 7th September I made a visit to Attenborough NR to see the white-winged black tern that had been found there a couple of days before. Whilst I was there I had a look at the bat box on the back of the visitor centre and observed droppings had accumulated on the ground below. Previously in 2012 there were droppings on the wall around the box which appeared to be those of pipistrelle bats, but earlier this summer I had found none. From late August though, droppings had started to appear on the ground. I therefore took the opportunity of the September visit to try and get an indication as to how much the box was being used.

The droppings looked a little bigger than 'regular' pipistrelle droppings but if I'm honest, initially I assumed that's what they were. When the box was opened though I thought straight away that the bat I could see didn't look like a 'regular' pipistrelle. It seemed a little larger for a start (and for some unknown reason it also had slightly damp fur which gave it a spiky haired appearance - perhaps it had rained the night before). Upon carefully extracting it from the box it initially became active before then playing dead in my hand. Whilst this is typical behaviour for Nathusius' pipistrelle it can also be exhibited by the other pipistrelle species on occasion so isn't an identification feature on its own. It did however give me a chance to examine the upper side of the tail membrane which was highly furred and typical for Nathusius' pip. The other feature I then looked for was the



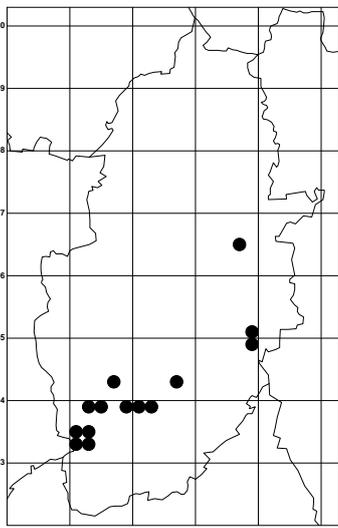
Photo: Tim Sexton, Notts Wildlife Trust



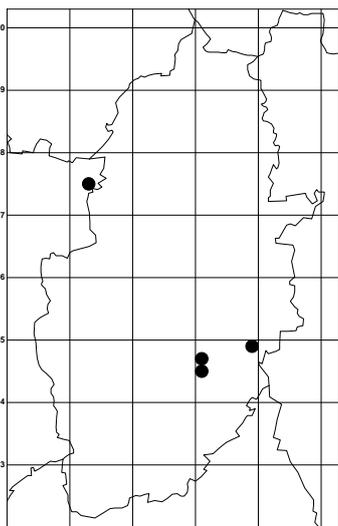
Drawing from *The Identification of British Bats* by DW Valden.



The penis is a distinctive shape and is conspicuously surrounded by white hairs, as shown on this photo from Attenborough NR in September.



Map (above) showing all tetrads for Nathusius' recorded in Notts.



Map (above) showing all tetrads for barbastelle recorded in Notts.



The barbastelle
Click [here](#) for more information.

dividing line in the wing cell between the fifth digit and the elbow (see drawing opposite); the line was there. Again, whilst not a fully diagnostic feature in isolation I was fairly sure I was holding a rarer pipistrelle. With hindsight I should have looked for other features to make my identification 100 %, and I should have determined its sex. Thankfully though I was to get another chance to rectify these schoolboy blunders!

I was fairly happy with my identification but just to make sure photographs were sent to two national experts on Nathusius' pipistrelle (Jon Russ and Daniel Hargreaves); one came back with a positive albeit not 100 % view that I was right, the other with a certain "it's a Nathusius'" reply. I took this to mean that I was correct with my identification but just to make doubly sure I thought it a good idea to visit the following weekend; on this occasion I would have the able back up of Matt Cook and Phil Carter and this time everything would get checked to make absolutely certain!

On opening the box this time we were surprised to see two bats! A brief glance gave the same impression as the week before; both looked to be quite big for 'regular' pips. They were quickly placed into a collecting bag to await inspection.

The first bat out was a female (forearm 34.5 mm, 5th digit 44.5 mm = ratio 1.29, weight 9.2 g, collagen band present) - all the measurements were OK for Nathusius'! 9.2 g would be a monster common pip (*P. pipistrellus*)!

The other bat was a male (forearm 33.5 mm, 5th digit 42 mm = ratio 1.25, weight 7 g, collagen band present, bulbous ovoid penis with strongly white hairs). The forearm to 5th digit ratio was only just OK at 1.25 (we didn't have callipers for ultra-precision) but three other features (the teeth, wing, and penis) were good for Nathusius' pipistrelle.

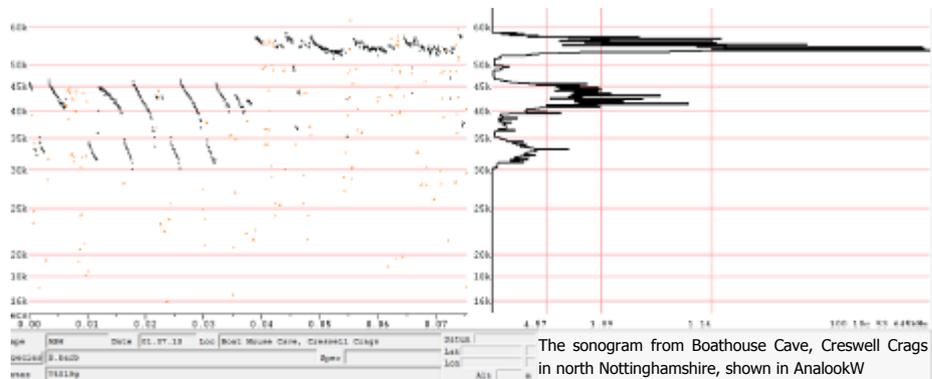
This second visit therefore not only confirmed my original species identification but it also uncovered the presence of a mating roost. This is quite a rare discovery with only a handful found in England. According to the map on the Nathusius' pipistrelle website (<http://www.nathusius.org.uk/Distribution.htm>) (although last updated in November 2012) there appear to be only five mating roosts found in England (with one in Wales, one in Scotland and nine in Northern Ireland). Others will have been found since the last map update but it's unlikely to be that many more.

Nathusius' pip males will typically occupy mating roosts and call from them or perform song-flight displays to attract females, which have either roosted locally during the summer or those passing through on migration. And many males are loyal to their mating roosts. So we hope *he* will be back at least - I will be watching this box very closely from now on!

Michael Walker

Barbastelle found at another site in Nottinghamshire

Since the summer of 2011, when we recorded our first barbastelle at Kneeton on the River Trent, we have been looking in vain for a follow up record for the bat group. Several transects were walked during 2012 and 2013 in the east of the county close to the original recordings, and a static detector spent several weeks in the original woodland location and others nearby.



Previous Newsletters

Issue 1, Autumn 2009

<http://www.nottsbatgroup.org.uk/PDF/snn1-181109.pdf>

Issue 2, Winter 2009 / 2010

<http://www.nottsbatgroup.org.uk/PDF/snn2-150210.pdf>

Issue 3, Summer 2010

<http://www.nottsbatgroup.org.uk/PDF/snn3-160610.pdf>

Issue 4, Winter 2011 / 12

<http://www.nottsbatgroup.org.uk/PDF/nn4-26-02-12.pdf>

Issue 5, Spring 2013

<http://www.nottsbatgroup.org.uk/PDF/nn5-180313.pdf>

Phil Brown's WABs

As well as at least four other species everyone's favourite, the brown long-eared bat, popped into a harp trap on several occasions during Phil's survey visits to Nottinghamshire woodlands, much to the interest of the half a dozen or so attendees (of mixed experience levels) who got to assist Phil with each survey; click [here](#) to see a brown long-eared bat being captured in a harp trap at Ploughman Wood (if viewing this electronically).

The photos below, taken by Notts Bat Group member Laura Hammerton, show the brown long-eared bat caught at Treswell Wood, and it being expertly processed by Phil Brown.



Nottinghamshire Bat Group has happily contributed funds to Phil for the DNA analysis of the three WAB bat dropping samples taken in our woodlands - you too can sponsor Phil [here](#), and you can follow his MSc research blog [here](#).

Alcathoe's bat in Notts.....? the story continues.....

Back in April 2010 it was formally confirmed that Alcathoe's bat (*Myotis alcathoe*), commonly referred to as 'Alcathoe', was a resident and breeding bat species in the UK. Our [June 2010 newsletter](#) describes the find. While this species was confirmed in both North Yorkshire and West Sussex from simultaneous studies, not a lot was known about whether and where it occurred between and beyond these distinctly separate locations, or indeed all that much about its ecology within the UK.

Therefore, in the early months of 2013, BCT, Bristol University (Professor Gareth Jones), and Daniel Whitby (see following article) set about formulating a methodology for acquiring some baseline knowledge of the distribution of Alcathoe's bat. Phil Brown, a self-funded MSc student at Bristol Uni, was to undertake the research.

The basic approach was for Phil to carefully select broadleaved woodlands (usually favoured by *Myotis* bats) in a large geographical band across England, to the south of Yorkshire and north of Sussex. The equipment was provided by BCT and Daniel Whitby provided task-specific training under an appropriate licence from Natural England. Phil would use two harp-traps at each woodland; one within relatively dense foliage and canopy cover, the other along edge habitat. At each harp-trap would be an acoustic lure playing a limited selection of synthesised social calls from *Myotis*; calls known to attract bats from this genus (and occasionally others).

Once captured, any bats suspected of being Alcathoe's bat had their DNA sampled via their droppings for later analysis. Whiskered bats (*M. mystacinus*) and Brandt's bats (*M. brandtii*) have very similar morphological traits to Alcathoe's bat and the three are often collectively referred to as 'the small *Myotis*' or 'WABs' (Whiskered, Alcathoe, Brandt's) so droppings were to be taken from any these three species.

In the early summer of 2013 Phil contacted Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust for permission to survey some woodlands / nature reserves in the county, and invited Nottinghamshire Bat Group along – naturally many people from both conservation organisations were very happy to say yes.

The woodlands Phil had targeted for his fieldwork in August and September were primarily selected for their abundance of broadleaved trees (particularly oak and ash), proximity to water bodies, and accessibility. The table below shows the number of bats of each species caught at each Nottinghamshire woodland.

Woodland	Date	Bat Species Caught	Total No.
Bunny Old Wood	23 rd Aug	1 x noctule	1
Kirton Wood	6 th Sept	3 x WABs; 1 x Natterer's bat (<i>M. nattereri</i>); 3 x soprano pipistrelles (<i>P. pygmaeus</i>); 1 x brown long-eared bat.	8
Dyscarr Wood	16 th Sept	1 x Natterer's bat	1
Treswell Wood	23 rd Sept	1 x brown long-eared bat	1
Ploughman Wood	26 th Sept	1 x brown long-eared bat	1

As you can see a decent range of species were captured in the county and at Kirton Wood there was also a good overall 'haul'; the record for any woodland Phil surveyed was eighteen bats. As you can also see, trapping in Nottinghamshire woodlands resulted in three WABs and therefore three possible Alcathoe's bats, all trapped at Kirton Wood near Tuxford in early September.

Importantly, the difference in capture rates on a given night is not necessarily a reflection of the abundance or diversity of bats in a given woodland, so less successful nights do not mean these Nottinghamshire woodlands or nature reserves are unfavourable for bats. Moreover, capture rates are often an indication of the favourability of the conditions for the survey including weather, time of year, and placement of the harp traps and operation of the lures.

Phil has now finished the fieldwork and is busy raising funds to complete the DNA analysis of all the bat droppings he acquired in 2013, ahead of writing up his MSc thesis in early 2014. Even if Alcathoe's bat is not yet confirmed from our three Notts samples we'd like to thank all of those involved in setting up and running this project and particularly Phil for guiding us through the fieldwork. This was an excellent way to engage members of the bat group – both new and long-standing – and to witness the conservation value of a somewhat unfamiliar survey and research technique. Let's hope more projects like this come our way..... ☺

Winter Events

(and Hibernation / Swarming Sites)

Post 'bat box season', November to February is traditionally a quieter period for the bat group as the little furry critters hibernate and many bat enthusiasts also take a well earned winter hiatus.

Our next confirmed events are therefore the 2014 indoor meetings; on Mon 5th January and Mon 3rd March.

At the latter of these we have Lisa Worledge, Partnerships Officer at BCT, giving us a talk on the Natural England Class Licensing system – an important topic for all bat workers, voluntary and professional. Click [here](#) for current FAQ's on Class Licensing.

Before the next indoor meeting there may be occasional outdoor winter events though, and the best place to receive notice of these is via our Facebook page, the Yahoo forum, and members email. Please always inform the organiser in advance if you are coming to an event (with your mobile number) in case of a late cancellation or change of plan.

Between now and January [Matt Cook](#) and [Chris Turner](#) are hoping to identify some potential hibernacula (and possibly Autumn swarming sites) within the county for outdoor surveys. If you would like to assist with this project including coming along on some ad-hoc survey visits, or you know of any extended tunnels, caves, mines or adits in Notts with a likelihood of safe access, then please let them know by email - click on their names above.



Bat Records

Recording where we find which bats is a very important part of bat conservation. We can't conserve Nottinghamshire bats and their habitats if we don't know where they are. Please remember to send records of bat roosts, grounded / injured bats, and records from bat detectors to the bat group via <http://www.nottsbatgroup.org.uk/recording.html> or Michael Walker nottsbatman@gmail.com

Brown Long-Eared Bats – An Unusual 'Nursery' Roost

On 22nd August this summer I got a text from Matt Cook about a grounded bat at a children's nursery / school centre in Clipstone, Mansfield - a "bat with biggish ears" was the description from the finder. I was intrigued. As a recently recruited bat carer I'd never had a brown long-eared bat (BLE) in the hand. Little did I know that this was to become a regular haunt of mine over the following weeks!

On arrival I quickly learnt that this was not one lone bat but in fact apparently a well established maternity roost that had been around for about five years. The bat I was there to pick up was safe and apparently OK but had exhausted itself and was slumped in a box. I decided to take her home for some rest, water and mealworms over the weekend. First though, I took a good look around.....

This was no typical BLE roost. The colony was essentially using the porch over a play area as a loft space! I followed a trail of droppings and came to a hole in between the school building and the roof of a porch space. A quick flashlight stroke and I was greeted with a clump of brown faces and long ears!

Monday morning came and I got another call; a second bat had fallen out of the roost into the playground! A second bat?! As the first one was ready to be released I decided to enlist the help of Chris Turner - the idea was just to post both bats back into the roost. After a little water, the second bat was somewhat sleepy but otherwise healthy. Chris took the lead and successfully posted the first sleepy bat back in;



Photo: Rebecca Dicks



Photo: Rebecca Dicks

now for my turn! My bat was much more awake and ready to fly; climbing a ladder with a wriggly BLE was rather scary. I tried very hard to post her back as close as possible to the last one, but bats being bats she had other ideas. So at 4.30 in the afternoon she decided to do a few laps. She finally landed on some tiles near the roost entrance. No sooner had she had done that then the whole roost started squeaking, seemingly guiding her back in - absolutely incredible and such a privilege to see. This was not to be the end of the adventures though!

A further three bats unfortunately fell out of the roost and it was decided that we would put a temporary fleece blanket below the entrance to try and break their fall until we could come up with a more suitable permanent solution that the children's centre were also happy with. This fleece blanket seemed to work fine for two of the tumbling bats who made it back safely. However, sadly we didn't get this installed in time to save the other one ☹

To gather some further information on the roost and how the bats are utilising the space, Chris and I set a date to go back at dusk. Unfortunately, with a very busy summer for us both, it was only in early October that we could get there. Unfortunately we were too late and they had already dispersed!! Here's hoping they come back next year, but by then we'll have a suitable 'safety net'!

Rebecca Dicks



Photo: Matt Cook

Daniel Whitby and Daniel Hargreaves had expertly fashioned this 'mobile harp trap' (above) for safely catching bats (where appropriate) as they exit roosts, and demonstrated its efficiency during the course. The roof of this farm cottage supported a colony of serotine bats (*Eptesicus serotinus*) which were radio-tagged and radio-tracked as part of the conservation research project on the Slindon National Trust Estate in West Sussex.

Center Parcs Bat Box Checks

This year at Center Parcs not only did we manage to fit in two visits with the bat group but I also had the chance to go round with the rangers, meaning that for the first time in two years all of Center Parcs' 277 boxes were checked! And it only took 4 days!

It was a very exciting series of checks and it seems that the site is developing with its bat potential:

- 33 boxes had bats present;
- 18 other boxes had bat droppings;
- 12 people attended the checks; and,
- 2 dogs (Twig and Fido) also attended.



Twig the very chilled Labrador

Advanced Bat Survey Techniques

You may recall from this time last year, and from an article in our [last newsletter](#) (March, 2013), the exciting discovery of a Geoffroy's bat (*Myotis emarginatus*) in West Sussex. The bat was captured by expert bat ecologist Daniel Whitby during a night of harp trapping as part of a conservation research project on a National Trust estate.

Daniel has been a bat ecologist for around fifteen years now having undertaken his formative tutelage from Frank Greenaway; a man who's contributions to bat research and conservation are somewhat legendary, particularly through his development of the Sussex Autobat acoustic lure and his incredible bat photography.

As well as bat conservation work Daniel also runs AEWC (Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants) Ltd, and this year, as an extension of the same bat conservation project in West Sussex, Daniel / AEWC ran a training course on Advanced Bat Survey Techniques. The aim of the course is to train and provide hands-on experience for all participants on these field techniques but crucially whilst funding, conducting, and assisting on a landscape level bat research and radio-tracking project. I was lucky enough to attend the residential course this summer.

The course was pitched at a wide range of participants from more experienced bat workers and enthusiastic amateurs through to professional ecological consultants, all looking to expand their knowledge, experience, and understanding of advanced bat survey techniques, and how these methods can be used to gather improved information. Indeed the attendees were a good mix exactly from each and all of these backgrounds.

Essentially the course structure comprised hands-on tutorials and workshops on many aspects of bat work by day (well, afternoon) followed by fieldwork by night; and as bats are out all night so were we. The daytime sessions covered a range of topics from the pros and cons of different survey techniques (with a focus on the more 'invasive' and specialist techniques such as mist-netting, harp-trapping and acoustic lures) to advanced bat identification and handling, night-vision technologies, project planning and licensing, and bat call identification. The night work primarily comprised putting much of this learning into supervised practice via roost emergence surveys, harp-trapping / mist-netting, radio-tracking, and pre-dawn re-entry surveys with some infra-red filming thrown in for good measure. Of course none of this was possible without a hearty lunch and tea to keep us going 😊

During my time as a bat conservationist and professional ecological consultant I've been on a number of courses covering different topics and run by various voluntary and professional institutions. Now I may always be biased towards a course focused on bats and with a good element of fieldwork but I have to say this was the best course of any content that I've been on, particularly given the very reasonable cost. The facilities and environment were excellent, the content was thoroughly enjoyable and a constant learning experience, and the pitch was just right; professional but informal and therefore perfectly suited to both amateur bat enthusiasts and keen professional consultants. In addition, and as an added bonus, Daniel Hargreaves had also been drafted in to help tutor on the course (in between trips moving house!). Daniel H is the founder of [Trinibats](#) and was the recipient of last year's BCT Pete Guest award for his contributions to UK bat conservation.

So, in a nutshell if you get the opportunity to attend one of Daniel W's courses (and I understand a format very similar to this has been confirmed for 2014), I would thoroughly recommend it. Not



Photo: Matt Cook



Cakes were eaten, and bats were found! And boy, bats were found! In total we counted:

10 noctules - plus one noctule skeleton, a casualty from the late start to Spring perhaps;

13 Leisler's bats (see photo below right);

50 soprano pipistrelles;

1 unconfirmed pipistrelle sp.; and,

7 brown long-eared bats - an exciting first for the boxes at Center Parcs! **See photo opposite >**

Some Soprano Stats (from the minute male to our chunky 7g female):

- Male - 4 g; 30 mm forearm;
- Male - 5 g; 31 mm forearm;
- Male - 4 g; 29.5 mm forearm;
- Male - 4 g; 32 mm forearm;
- Female - 5 g; 31 mm forearm; and,
- Female - 7 g; 32 mm forearm.

Including two found tucked inside a wasps nest Photo: Jo Bryan

Some Noctule Stats:

- Male - 29.5 g; 50.5 mm forearm;
- Male - 32.5 g; 52.5 mm forearm;
- Male - 33 g; 55 mm forearm; and,
- Female - 29 g; 52 mm forearm.

Leisler's Bats Stats (see photo):

- Male - 17 g; 43 mm forearm;
- Male - 17 g; 41 mm forearm;
- Male - 17 g; 43.5 mm forearm; and,
- Male - 17 g; 44.5 mm forearm.

The Leisler's bats were their typical feisty selves. Although not always as vocal as they can be, we did have one who forced his way out of the blocked up hole of the bat box to fly off in a paddy!

Jo Bryan

only can you receive expert training and participate in enjoyable fieldwork with likeminded folk, but most importantly the fieldwork contributes to research and conservation; an angle I understand is quite unique. For the bat 'twitcher' in some of you, you are also likely to see several species that you are very unlikely to in the East Midlands, or indeed most places except during specialist bat work; we saw no less than fourteen of the eighteen resident UK species in the hand during the seven day course.

Quite unbelievably, on the very last night a familiar face also turned up, to take the final count to fifteen species - I think even Daniel was pretty surprised to catch the exact same Geoffroy's bat as he had last year! (shown on the right above, held by Daniel next to a Natterer's bat). Whilst Geoffroy's bat is not officially classed as one of our resident species, I wonder at this rate if that's just a matter of time.....

Matt Cook



The seven brown long-eared bats found during a bat box check at Center Parcs in October. BLE's are an uncommon species in Nottinghamshire bat boxes.

North Notts – a Leisler's Bat Stronghold

Back in May this year a somewhat hastily arranged and belated bat box check at Clumber Park came across a Leisler's bat nursery roost in a wooden standard box. Although we kind of knew this species bred in the park from the regular occurrence of males and females found in boxes this roost of eighteen females was the first maternity roost in the park, as far as we're aware.

As you'll read in Jo Bryan's article opposite small numbers (of both sexes) of Leisler's bats pop up quite regularly down the road at Center Parcs (see photo below). And somewhere in the middle is Budby Heath.....

Back in our [June 2010 newsletter](#) Sheila Wright, active member and former Chair of Notts Bat Group, penned an excellent article on the establishment of two bat box schemes at Budby Heath in the early 90's; Leisler's bats were first recorded in some of those boxes in 1997. Here, Sheila gives us an interesting update on this scheme. This all goes to show that Leisler's bats seem to be doing pretty well in Robin Hood country (and one species we didn't catch in West Sussex! See above).....

"On 12th June 2012, a nursery roost of at least eight Leisler's bats was found in a standard wooden bat box on the heath. Nursery roosts have been found on nearby Forestry Commission land (Elkesley Wood), but this was the first time that one had been confirmed at Budby South Forest. The bats had not yet given birth by the late date of 12th June, reflecting the poor weather in 2012. By the autumn check in October 2012, the nursery roost had of course dispersed - but was back in June 2013!



The most recent check was carried out on 11th October 2013 - when a harem of four soprano pipstrelles was found in one of the boxes, and a total of seven noctules in others - two boxes with two each in, and three singletons. In addition, a "bat hotel" (a large woodcrete summer box) purchased on our behalf by Natural England and erected on the June 2013 visit, had bat droppings in it".

Sheila Wright and Matt Cook

Bat Library

Over the coming weeks we will be setting up an online 'library' on our website for group members. This will comprise uploaded documents such as recent research papers and news articles for folk to use and peruse.



The bat group currently also has a small 'off-line' library of books and other literature which any of our paid-up members are welcome to borrow. Please contact Michael Walker (nottsbatman@gmail.com) for further information.

Newsflash(es)!

We've just received confirmation from BCT that a **Regional Bat Conference is confirmed for the Midlands in April 2014**. The exact date and venue is currently unconfirmed but is likely to be only around an hour's drive from most of our members. So no excuses not to attend! ☺ We'd highly recommend attendance at any BCT conference – always a fantastic way to learn about bats, bat group and scientific research projects, and meet like-minded bat enthusiasts. There may also be the opportunity to learn new fieldwork techniques, and at the national conference, to enjoy a few beers ☺

Christmas Do!

Speaking of beers, the new committee has just agreed to organise a Christmas social for the group in Nottingham. At the time of going to press this is being finalised but will be on **Thurs 12th or Thurs 19th December** and will include a bar, buffet, quiz and raffle. So keep an eye on your emails and try and keep these dates free ☺



We have a growing number of followers of our Facebook page and regularly use this page to share information. We know many of you are quietly addicted to Facebook so please follow us too [here](#).

Bat Care Round-Up, 2013

This year we were lucky enough to gain some new bat carers for Nottinghamshire following some recent training sessions, which was just as well as it turned out to be another busy year. I'm sure that many of the new carers were feeling nervous about their first rescue in particular, but all have done a great job and have been a huge help in spreading the load. And thanks to Chris Turner's woodworking skills many of us were armed with brand new rescue boxes too.

In summary, records received so far this year indicate that 34 bats in total have been rescued by the group. Of these 14 were released, 16 died and 4 have become permanent captives. This fits with my usual result each year of about 50% of rescued bats surviving or being released.

This year was an average year for me personally, with 8 bats taken in for care including 4 babies, 2 of which are still in captivity. Unfortunately though, none of my rescues this year were releasable. I am fairly sure that most of the others were cat victims; 4 either died soon after rescue or were taken for euthanasia due to their injuries. Chris collected 3 of the above before passing them on to me, and also rescued several more, 4 of which were released. Felicity Pook rescued 4 bats, including one from Leicestershire, 3 of which died. Rebecca Dicks, a new carer this year who did a great job, rescued several bats including babies and adults, and 5 of which were released. Margaret Thurgood rescued 3 bats: a juvenile common pipistrelle which died the next day, and two juvenile brown long-eared bats from Bramcote Tower. These had strayed from the roost in the tower when it was due to be opened to the public so Margaret took them in for the day, rehydrated them, then returned them safely to the tower the same evening after the event was over. In addition, 2 dead bats were found in Clipstone in early June, and several dead young bats from one roost in Daybrook in late August (which had all become cat victims).

Matt Cook rescued 8 bats from 6 locations, all common or soprano pips; 3 were successful releases including the first 2 of the year (so things started well!) but then 4 casualties in total including two sopranos from Kelham Hall and one common pip that died shortly after rescue. Matt's remaining bat is a female common pip rescued in August, who has become a 'permanent' captive. She's blind and can't fly but despite this she's very active and finds food and feeds herself well. Neither Matt nor the vet (Charlotte Hanson) can find any obvious external injury or internal trauma. Hopefully this pip will become a useful bat for education and has already made her first appearance at a talk Michael Walker gave in Burton Joyce.



Despite better weather conditions this summer, we still had plenty of calls concerning baby and juvenile bats; 9 in total were rescued during July and August. Many bats seemed to be wandering away from their roost in the hot weather and coming to grief. Most of these could not be returned to their roost and didn't survive in captivity. I took in several babies including 3 common pips from the same address, one of which (the male) has survived. Unfortunately my other remaining baby bat is female, so they can't be kept together, but they are proving to be good bats for showing the public. Another surviving baby bat was one of Felicity's first rescues - a common pip, which also developed well but isn't releasable.

Finally, Margaret Thurgood continues to look after her long term captives – she now has two whiskered bats (one of which is 15 years old!), one Natterer's bat, and one brown long-eared bat, so unusually no pipistrelles. They have been out and about as usual doing their excellent job of meeting and winning over the public.

A big thank you to everyone who has helped out this year. Hopefully we will have a quiet winter. The next steps are for the Bat Group to continue to train bat carers, review our protocols on bat rescue, and in particular agree a protocol for baby bats.

Lynn Victor

All text and formatting (and therefore mistakes!) by Matt Cook unless otherwise credited. Special thanks to Michael Walker, Rebecca Dicks, Jo Bryan, Dr Sheila Wright and Lynn Victor for their contributions this quarter; contributions from any of our members on anything bat related are always welcome. Your next newsletter will be with you in the Spring (2014). Until then..... Happy batting! ☺