

BATS (CHIROPTERA) - 2010

Dr. Colin R. Pope

Twelve different bat species were recorded in 2010. For the first time, there were no records of Daubenton's Bat. Eleven house roosts were counted by group members and householders. Graham and Donna Street's Bat Hospital was kept busy throughout the year, dealing with a total of 88 bats. Two research projects have taken place on the Island this year. Orly Razgour, from Bristol University, has been investigating the ecology of one Britain's rarest and least understood bats, the Grey Long-eared. I am grateful to Orly Razgour for sharing her, as yet unpublished, findings from her studies. James Aegerter (Food & Environment Research Agency) has been studying populations of Serotine bats across their range to understand how much movement there is between populations. He visited the Island in August together with Ph.D. student Caroline Moussy from Exeter University and collected samples from bats caught at three house roosts in East Wight.

The following bat species were recorded in 2010:

Greater Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*)

Recorded from the Shide hibernaculum on three occasions during the winter months. One was present on 28th November and 5th December. On 19th February, there were two hibernating individuals. This is the first time that more than one bat has been seen at any one time on the Island since 1993 at Carisbrooke Castle.

Whiskered / Brandt's Bat (*Myotis mystacinus / brandtii*)

The long established house roost at Pallance Road, Northwood produced a maximum count of 33 bats on 6th July. The bats arrived on 18th May, left during June and returned in early July (SC), when young bats were present.

There were four records of grounded bats taken in to the Bat Hospital during 2010: at Arreton (March), two in central Newport on different dates in August and one at Camphill Prison in September.

Natterer's Bat (*M. nattereri*)

There were few records this year. At Shide hibernaculum, four were recorded on 3rd January (a high count) and one on 19th February but none at all during the November and December visits. At the Bat Hospital, just one individual was received this year, a male found grounded at Shalfleet in December.

Bechstein's Bat (*M. bechsteini*)

There were three records this year, all from the Bat Hospital and all found in unusual locations. A female was found in May at Totland in a recycling box. A male was found in September inside a wood burning stove. Strangest off all was a female in Godshill found in the hub cap of a car which had been driven to Little Kennedy Farm. Miraculously, it was none the worse for its journey!

Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)

A maximum of 17 were counted at the Havenstreet house roost, shared with serotine bats (JL). A female and a juvenile male were caught here in August during studies by James Aegerter into the Serotine population (see below).

Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*)

The maximum count this year was 47 on 11th June from Meadow Cottage, Adgestone (JR). James Aegerter collected bats for sampling from roost sites at Adgestone, Newport and Havenstreet. The bats were virtually all females and juveniles. He was most surprised to catch an adult male bat from the nursery roost in Havenstreet.

Two males were treated at the Bat Hospital during the year.

Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus* / *P. pygmaeus*)

The maximum roost count this year was 173 bats counted on 25th June at a roost in Hamstead Drive (LG). On 19th February, a hibernating female was discovered behind the church organ at St Olave's, Gatcombe when it was being restored (GS).

A total of 68 pipistrelles (both sibling species) were taken into the Bat Hospital during the year.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*)

There were three records from the Bat Hospital this year. A female was found at Blackwater in June; a male at Northcourt Manor, Shorwell in July; and a female at Wroxall in July.

Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*)

A maximum count of 19 was made on 16th June from Brook Hill House (MJ). Four individuals were treated at the Bat Hospital this year.

Grey Long-eared Bat (*P. austriacus*)

Orly Razgour, Ph. D. student from Bristol University, is carrying out research into the poorly understood ecology of Grey Long-eared Bats. In 2009, her study site was in South Devon; this year she investigated the long established roost site at Niton. By radio-tagging, she was able to establish that individual bats ranged widely for foraging. Foraging grounds were up to 4km away from the main maternity roost, with more than half the foraging grounds more than 2km away. The colony range extended over 17.4 km², which was approximately half the range of the Devon population she studied. The bats showed a preference for agriculturally unimproved and semi-improved meadows and marshland vegetation in landscapes full of small woods and hedgerows. Brown long-eared bats, by contrast, are predominantly woodland feeders. Thanks to Orly's research, we now know that other sites for Grey Long-eared bats within their 17.4km home range (such as Stenbury Manor) probably involve the same breeding group of individuals.

Orly also investigated Grey Long-eared Bats at the Yaverland Manor roost.

There were four records from the Bat Hospital: a male at East Cowes in January; a female at Chale in May; a male at Chillerton in August; and a male at Shanklin in September.

Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*)

There was just one record this year, which came from the Bat Hospital. A grounded female was found in central Newport in September.

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