

BATS (CHIROPTERA) - 2005

Colin R. Pope

A total of fifteen different species were recorded in 2005, a record number and a reflection of the range of bat work carried out throughout the year. Twenty-six house roosts were counted by bat group members and householders. Graham and Donna Street's bat hospital was again kept busy throughout the year; they dealt with a total of 99 bats, slightly fewer than in 2004. Mist netting was again carried out by Ian Davidson-Watts, this year in Briddlesford Copse, Coombe Plantation (near Brook) and woodland along the Undercliff.

Bob Stebbings, a well known bat expert, was commissioned to carry out a bat survey of a small woodland area off Sylvan Avenue in East Cowes. This formed a part of an investigation into the ecological impacts of a proposed major redevelopment. He and his assistant spent a total of eight nights in June and July recording with time expansion bat detectors and mist netting, in addition to visual observations. His results revealed a remarkably diverse bat fauna in a small urban woodland. He recorded around eleven species including roosting Barbastelle, Pipistrelle and Long-eared Bat and the first Island records of Leisler's Bat.

The following bat species were recorded in 2005:

Greater Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*)

This rare species is evidently still surviving on in the Island, despite the fact that there were no records in 2004. A single individual was present in the Undercliff hibernaculum on 11 January (SC), but not seen here on 16 January. One was present in a traditional chimney roost at Carisbrooke Castle on 9 June. This was the first time it has been seen in this site since 2000.

A detailed bat survey carried out by Bob Stebbings in a small woodland in the middle of East Cowes recorded this species from visual observation and detector records. This was most unexpected. It was recorded on three visits during survey work in June and July, most likely the same individual on each occasion.

Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)

One male was grounded at Newport Business Centre on 29 March. Two males were grounded in front of two shops in St James' Street, Newport, both on 31 August. One female was grounded in Cowes town centre.

An adult male was netted in woodland at St Lawrence on 21 August.

Whiskered/Brandt's Bat (*M. mystacinus / brandtii*)

One house roost, at Northwood, was monitored (ShC) with 17 counted on 7 June. Four taken in to the Bat Hospital during the year were all probably Whiskered Bats. There was one in Ventnor town centre; a female at Bembridge embankment; a female at East Cowes; and a female at Sandford.

Whiskered Bat (*M. mystacinus*)

A lactating female was caught in a mist net set up in Coombe Plantation on 29 July. See also above.

Brandt's Bat (*M. brandtii*)

A lactating female was caught in a mist net set up in Coombe Plantation on 29 July.

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Natterer's Bat (*M. nattereri*)

One in the Shide Tunnel hibernaculum on 22 January.

Individual lactating females were caught in mist nets at Dunnage Copse (Bridlesford) on 7 July and in Coombe Plantation on 29 July. A female was found grounded at Cranmore in the summer.

Bechstein's Bat (*M. bechsteini*)

One found dead at Sibden Road, Shanklin in September and a male, badly injured, at Freshwater in the same month. An injured male at Harcourt Sands, Puckpool, on 17 November.

A period of mist netting and radio tracking in woods at Bridlesford during early July, led to the discovery of tree roosts in Six Acre Copse (33 counted out on 7 July) and Vicarage Copse (43 counted out on 3rd July). Both sites were old Great Spotted Woodpecker holes in ash trees.

An adult male was netted in woodland at St Lawrence on 21 August.

Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)

A male was grounded alongside of Havenstreet Railway Station on 16 March (CC) and subsequently released. In the late summer, a juvenile was found here which had allegedly fallen out of the loft.

An individual was seen emerging from a tree roost used by Bechstein's Bats in Six Acre Copse on 7 July.

Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*)

A detailed bat survey carried out by Bob Stebbings in a small woodland in the middle of East Cowes recorded this species from time-expansion detector records on 20 June and, whilst observing nesting birds at dawn on 15 April. There have been no previous records of this species from the Island which indicates that it must be rare but perhaps overlooked.

Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*)

Five roosts were monitored this year. The highest count was 38 on 10 June from Meadow Cottage, Adgestone (JR/JG). The bat hospital treated a female from Winford and a female from Afton.

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

A hibernation roost was discovered in the gap between the wall and the porch above the door of the chapel at Carisbrooke Castle on 22 January.

Nineteen house roosts were monitored this year. The highest peak count recorded was 294 on 17 June from a house roost at Cranmore. Other high counts were 131 on 14 June from a roost at Marks Corner; 105 on 14 June from a roost at Yafford; and 100 on 23 June from a roost at Hamstead. These numbers are exceptional; the majority of house roosts hold between 20 and 40 individuals.

Both sibling species of Pipistrelle bat are recorded from the Island. This year, an analysis of time-expansion bat recordings from Carisbrooke Castle and from ten x 50km road transects carried out between early May and late September, has shown that the overwhelming majority of Pipistrelle bat passes were attributable to *P. pipistrellus*.

Pipistrelles are by far our commonest bat; 75% of all bats taken in by the bat hospital during the year were Pipistrelles.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle (*P. nathusii*)

A detailed bat survey carried out by Bob Stebbings in a small woodland in the middle of East Cowes recorded this species from time-expansion detector records on 20 June.

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Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*)

Two roosts were monitored this year. The maximum count, as usual, from a house at Brook Hill, was 12 on 14 June.

Individuals were trapped in mist nets set up in Coombe Plantation, and Dunnage and Six Acre Copses at Briddlesford. Four individuals were taken into the bat hospital.

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

Six individuals were counted in the roofspace of the traditional summer roost site at Niton on 24 September. Two males were present in a temporary roost site at Brading wax works. A female was grounded at Shorwell.

Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*)

A non-lactating female was found grounded at Lugley Street in Newport on 11 June.

A detailed bat survey carried out by Bob Stebbings in a small woodland in the middle of East Cowes recorded this species from time-expansion detector records on 14 and 15 July. Their presence was confirmed and tracked down to a roost site in one of the veteran oaks in the wood, with a colony of at least seven individuals. This would suggest a nursery roost.

Two individuals were caught in mist nets set up in Briddlesford Copse, a male on 4 July and a pregnant female on 6 July.

Individuals were detected by analysis of time expansion calls at Coombe Plantation on 29 July and in woodland at St Lawrence on 21 August.

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Author: C.R.Pope, 14 High Park Rd, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 1BP