

BRECKLAND BAT PROJECT—RESULTS FROM THE 2014 FIELD SEASON

Members will recall that in December 2013 the Society made a grant of £750 for the acquisition of bat-detecting equipment to inaugurate the Breckland Bat Project. With the help and support of Dr Stuart Newson and Hazel Evans of the British Trust for Ornithology in Thetford, we have now received the very exciting provisional results from the first field

From mid-April until the end of September this year, the bat detector was available for Society members to book out and set up overnight in locations across the Brecks in order to automatically trigger and record bats as they hawked about on their feeding forays. Data crunching has now revealed that the detector was used at 159 different locations across 64 x 1-km squares in the Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks this summer, a remarkable achievement! However, of the 64 1-km squares surveyed, the majority—55 (86% of total squares surveyed)—were in Norfolk, so clearly we shall need to make more of an effort in the Suffolk Brecks in the remaining two years of the project.

In terms of the number of bat recordings made, an extraordinary total of 44,945 individual recordings from the Brecks were collected

Breakdown of bat recordings made in the Brecks during the 2014 field season (mid-April to end of September)

Species	Number of recordings	% of total
Common pipistrelle	18,855	42.0%
Soprano pipistrelle	15,867	35.3%
Serotine	515	1.5%
Brown long-eared bat	559	1.2%
Noctule	337	0.8%
Barbastelle	303	0.7%
Leisler's	173	0.4%
Daubenton's	132	0.3%
Nathusius' pipistrelle	122	0.3%
Natterer's	93	0.2%
Whiskered / Brandt's	10	<0.1%
Unidentified bat species	3,981	8.9%
Pipistrelle species	2,176	4.8%
<i>Myotis</i> species	1,350	3.0%
Noctule, Serotine and Leisler's	472	1.1%

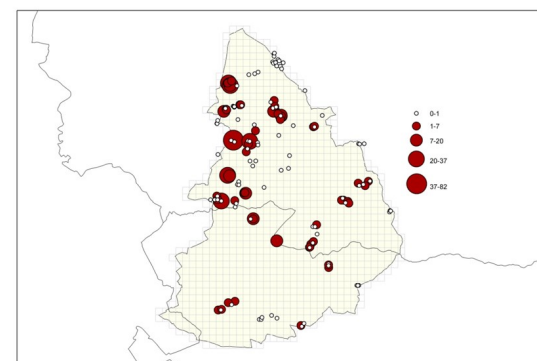
and analysed, comprising at least 11 species. Further recording validation for some of the cryptic species—including bats currently grouped at the *Myotis* family level—will be carried out over the autumn, so the total species number could potentially rise even higher. A breakdown of results appears below, together with interim distribution maps for two bat species. Next season's recording will start in April 2015, so watch this space and think about signing up to help expand scientific knowledge of these fascinating creatures in our area!

Photo by Clive Sheppard



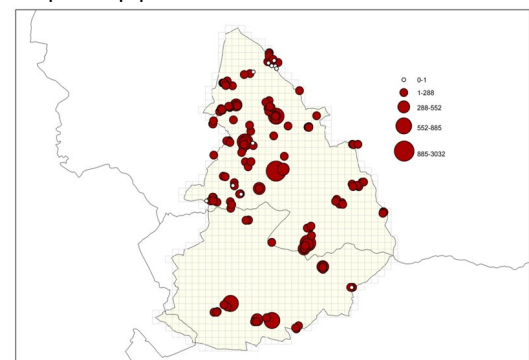
The magnificent silhouette of a Noctule bat against the evening sky

Example relative abundance maps (number of recordings) for Serotine and Soprano pipistrelle



Serotine

Soprano pipistrelle



DID YOU KNOW...

that bats are the only mammals capable of continuous, self-propelled flight. Others, such as flying squirrels, can only glide.