

	<h1>The Northern Natterer</h1>	Central Scotland Bat Group
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EDITORIAL

This year has been very productive for Central Scotland Bat Group. In fact so much so, your regular Newsletter Editor, Beccy, has had her second baby Eilidh Louise on the 28th September. Many congratulations to her and her family!



So I'm helping her out for this issue.

Yet again winter is fast approaching with the usual autumn gales and heavy rain now a regular feature. Happy evening spent with our batty friends seem like a lifetime ago. However it's also good to get some well earned rest and see that bit more of our families and friends.

For those who can't bear to be parted from CSBG we have some interesting events planned over the next few months and we have those details in this edition.

There's also some very interesting news snippets and articles in this edition including one from Sue Thouless on Bat Rescue and one from John Haddow on Leisler's bats (thanks to both for their articles) which I hope you enjoy.

It will be Christmas next month, so get ready to buy those bat related presents that everyone close to you will love. Information on these can be found later in the newsletter.

In the meantime I'd like to wish everyone good fun over the winter and I look forward to seeing some of you at our forthcoming bat events.

Thanks to all the contributors to this issue especially Beccy Osborn, and the various news sources.

Chris Gould

WINTER PROGRAMME

As always there are lots going on at Central Scotland Bat Group over the next few months. Here's the winter programme...

Hibernation Survey at Craigend Limekilns, Cambusbarron - 29th January

A hibernation survey of the limekilns near Cambusbarron. A short survey, but hopefully we'll find some bats! Contact Jenny for more information.

Hibernation Survey at Doune Castle and Aberfoyle Slate Mine - 5th February

Double hibernation survey of both the castle and slate mine. A good chance of seeing hibernating bats at both sites. Contact John for more information.

Hibernation Survey of the Ochils Mines - 13th February

Hibernation surveys of several of the Ochils mines, good chance to explore the mines and hopefully see some bats. Contact John for more information.

Spring Talk - 22nd March

TBA, at Leighton House.

Wine and Cheese Social and (short) AGM - 28th April

A short AGM then a wine and cheese evening at Leighton House.

Bat Rescue

It was a warm sunny day at the beginning of September and I was tidying up outside. Whilst opening the sliding door to the stone outbuilding a high pitched squeaking was heard and upon further investigation a tiny leg and foot was seen sticking out from between the metal runners at the top of the sliding door. I immediately thought that it was a bat and probably in some distress and maybe injured. Although it was several feet away from the door mechanism I couldn't be sure if it had been injured by the opening of the door or injured previously and subsequently disturbed by the door opening. Either way, it was sheltering in a within a metal structure which I knew was not an ideal place to be for a bat. After some consultation with Beccy Osborn, an experienced bat worker, I collected an empty shoe-box. I put on gloves and much to my daughters horror, who was terrified at the thought of a bat, encouraged the bat to drop from the runner into the box held just below it. After the bat had settled into the box, I put in a small lid with some water in it and had a better look at the bat.

Straight away I could see that this was not the expected pipistrelle species that I had recorded previously flying back and forth over my garden but was a brown long-eared bat. Its right leg and wing looked injured and I knew it needed care before it could be released again. I contacted Anne Youngman of the BCT and she arranged to come and collect it later that day. Anne confirmed that it was a young male and that it was indeed injured and arranged for Tracy Joliffe to care for it. Tracy looked after 'Cassius', as he was named for two weeks feeding him chopped up meal worms, before bringing him back to my house for his release. His injuries had healed although he was left with a permanent kink in the end of the wing but that didn't stop him from flying. Tracey had let him have a trial flight previously in a small pen to be sure that he could fly O.K. So, on a calm evening in mid September the whole family gathered to watch his release including my niece and nephew. Cassius was very feisty and raring to go and as soon as dusk arrived he happily left Tracey's hand and disappeared down the garden into the night.

Sue Thouless



Injured right leg visible and his long ears curled over.



In the box before taken away to be cared for.



Cassius raring to go before being released.



Tracey giving Cassius a final check over.

Alcathoe's bat discovered in Yorkshire and Sussex –

from the BBC news website

A species of bat never seen before in the UK has been discovered in caves in Yorkshire and Sussex.

Myotis alcathoe, or Alcathoe's bat, was found in woodland in Rydedale in the North York Moors National Park and the South Downs of Sussex.

The bats, which are about the size of the end of a thumb, were identified by researchers from Leeds and Sheffield universities. It is believed they could be present in other parts of Britain.

The bats were found during a Europe-wide study of bat population ecology and genetics.

'Swarming' sites

The species was discovered in Greece in 2001 and is a native of continental Europe, but until now it was presumed that the English Channel had acted as a barrier preventing it from reaching the UK.

Researchers believe the bat has not been spotted before because its appearance is similar to other species.

Professor John Altringham, from the University of Leeds, said: "Most of the bats were captured as they entered underground 'swarming' sites, where bats gather to mate before going into hibernation."

He said the discovery took the number of bat species established in the UK from 16 to 17.

Brian Walker, Forestry Commission wildlife officer for the North York Moors, said: "We have some incredibly rich bat habitats in North Yorkshire.

"It was only a few years ago that work locally helped to confirm that the common pipistrelle was actually made up of two different species."



Alcathoe's bat was discovered in Yorkshire and Sussex

Looking for Leisler's - radio-tracking Leisler's bat in Glen Trool and the Cree Valley in July and August

John Haddow

That Leisler's bat is resident in Scotland has been known since the 1980s. These bats turn up fairly regularly in bat roost boxes in woodland in one small area of the southwest, the Cree Valley and Glen Trool. There is only one building where they have been found as more than the occasional stray, and that is a primary school in Newton Stewart, at the south end of the Cree Valley. Nobody knew exactly when they use that building, since I have been there on a number of occasions over the last few years, and never found any signs of their presence. However, being asked to give advice on the bats in this school based on very little local knowledge of where these bats are and how they live finally gave me the push to do something more to find out about these small cousins of the noctule. Together with Stuart Spray, who can be said to be a "local" batworker (he lives 50 miles away from the Cree Valley) with an on-off relationship with these bats, I decided to have a serious attempt to radio-track some Leisler's bats.

The first requirement of any radio-tracking project is to be able to catch the animals in order to attach a radio-transmitter. The normal strategy with bats is to start from a nursery colony, catching adult females which must return to feed their pups. Since there is no known nursery roost in Scotland, our strategy was to first look in bat boxes and secondly to attempt to mist net with the help of a "sonic lure" to attract bats.

I should explain that the use of "we" means that in addition to Stuart and I, there was a team of volunteers, able to spare from one night to a few nights, assisting with the work of finding and radio-tracking the bats. Without these volunteers, we could not have obtained half the information we did, literally!

We managed to find and radio track three male Leisler's bats in July. These three males occupied three distinct woodland areas, and a pattern soon appeared in that these bats foraged in a relatively small area and used a variety of natural and artificial roosts within an even smaller core area. All three radio tracked male territories plus a fourth male area had a loch or substantial river within them. Foraging studies in Ireland found that females travelled typically 10 to 15km from the nursery roost. These males were found to use a foraging zone of no more than 1km², and within that area appeared to display within an even smaller area. Leisler's bats are unique in Europe in "song-fighting" using a call which is just audible to our ears (12-14kHz). Whereas Leisler's bat males call in flight and also from a perch on a tree, noctules prefer to sit in a woodpecker hole or similar crevice and shout. Some of the noctule calls are audible to us, but the majority of the courting calls are higher.

August saw us returning to try to catch female Leisler's bats. With a more limited time for radio-tracking we were fortunate to catch a single female on the second night, in our second male's territory. In spite of these bats being high and fast fliers, the amazing "sonic lure" attracted the female to hit a mist net at only 2m from the ground.

Whereas we were able to follow the males for 9, 14 and 17 nights respectively – the length of the battery life for each of their transmitters, our female lost her radio tag on the third night. However in the three nights (and days) she spent time in three different male territories, losing her transmitter in a tree only 10m from the original roost used by our first male. The tentative conclusion drawn from this limited insight into female behaviour is that, following the nursery period, adult females visit male

territories in order to choose a mate. We know that, later on in the year, groups of bats can be found in bat boxes in this area. Does this mean that our female would end up staying with one of the males, or would she continue to move around? Clearly much more research is needed for us to answer this.

What next? As a consequence of our familiarity with Leisler's bats and their echolocation calls in this one small area of Scotland, I have been examining recent recordings from ultrasound monitoring all over southwest Scotland, and I have to conclude that Leisler's bat is the commoner of the two *Nyctalus* species (the noctule is the other) in western Dumfries and Galloway, Ayrshire and Lanarkshire. The noctule appears to have a southeastern distribution in Scotland. However I am keen to examine any good quality recordings (either sound or Anabat) from anywhere east of the M74 to find the eastern extent of Leisler's bat.

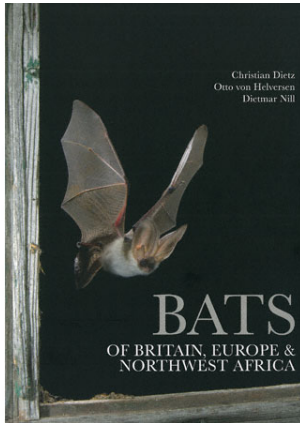
An interesting fact I learned very recently concerns a breeding population of the species in Catalunya (north-east Spain). A study has concluded that while the males are sedentary and remain in Spain, females migrate between nursery areas in northeast France and Germany, and their breeding area in Catalunya. While it is unlikely that Scottish Leisler's bats travel anything like that distance, could the females be breeding somewhere distant from the Cree Valley – Glen Trool area?



Photo of male number 4, not radio-tracked. The other three were named Lenny, Baldrick and Bruce. Number 4 has to be content with "Nicky No-Name". The female was called Queenie – because she was caught in Baldrick's territory (fans of Blackadder will see the connection)

Christmas is coming....

The bat bazaar is a great place to get Christmas presents for the batty man or woman in your life. And it's even better because the Bat Conservation Trust profits through the website....



Bat detectors: http://www.batbazaar.co.uk/bats/Bat_Detectors.html

Bat CD's and DVDs http://www.batbazaar.co.uk/bats/Bat_CD_DVD.html

Bat Books: http://www.batbazaar.co.uk/bats/Book_Bazaar.html

Bat Worker accessories: http://www.batbazaar.co.uk/bats/Bat_Worker.html

Bat Jewelry (not associated with the bat bazaar): <http://www.kabiri.co.uk/tiny-bat-necklace.html>



Hibernacula Photos:

Here are some good pictures from John H from the Hibernacula visits earlier in 2010. Hopefully we'll see loads more at the 2011 visits as well!





Central Scotland Bat Group

The Central Scotland Bat Group (CSBG) was founded in 1984 by a group of people who were interested in bats and wanted to learn more about them. The aim of CSBG is to further the cause of knowledge about bats and their need for conservation in every way possible. The group has close links with the Bat Conservation Trust Scottish Bat Officer. There are currently around 30 members. Subscription rates are £5 pa. (or £6 per household). CSBG operates in Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannan Council areas.

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BAT COUNTS:

Don't forget to send Kirsty kirstymorr@yahoo.co.uk any bat counts you have for this season!