

BatMann

The newsletter of Manx Bat Group

Autumn 2014



How to build a bat

We recently teamed up with the Manx Wildlife Trust Watch group, who wanted to learn more about bats.

It was the night before Hop tu Naa and an enthusiastic group started the evening with some batty crafts – stencilling bats onto stones, colouring in bat pictures and preparing bat finger puppets.

Everyone had fun looking at pictures and information to find answers to a bat quiz, and we then tackled some true or false statements about bats.

To find out the answers we decided to build a bat! Hollie volunteered to be our bat, and she was soon kitted out with all the features that make a bat a bat: a nice furry body to make her a mammal; some (inflatable!) bat wings; big ears to hunt for her dinner; big glasses to show that

she's not really blind, as the saying goes, but has very good eyesight; big feet to hang on upside-down with; her single bat baby (and of course its milk in a bottle!); and lastly some tasty mealworms and beetles for her to eat. Yum!

Afterwards Sue and Margaret from the Bat Group answered lots more questions about bats, from how long does a bat live, to where do bats sleep, and are there really vampire bats (we always get asked that one). Everyone had a chance to look at some preserved specimens of real bats and see how tiny they actually are.

We rounded off with a game of 'bat and moth', where the bat has to guess where the moth is by following its clicks. Last was a funny singing game, and everyone went away happy.

Margaret Hunter



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Contributions for the newsletter may be sent
for consideration to the editor at:
info@manxbatgroup.org

Members can also submit stories via our
website. Just log in then choose 'Submit an
article' from the user menu.

www.manxbatgroup.org

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Sue Moon, John Wardle

BatMann and website: Margaret Hunter

*Please check our website for latest officers, who are
due to change at our AGM in December.*

Bat Helpline

**If you find an injured or grounded bat
or have a bat query, please call:**

366177

Get involved!

There are lots of opportunities for you to
get involved in Bat Group activities, and
at the same time learn more about bats
and help promote their conservation:

Bat surveys

We get asked to survey properties subject
to planning proposals/building work for
any potential issues that may affect bats.
We usually visit twice and need lots of
volunteers to cover all angles!

Educational activities

We visit schools, youth and community
groups and workplaces to give talks about
bats, run awareness-raising activities or
lead private bat walks.

Your bat stories

Tell us your bat-related news, bat-spotting
records or stories of encounters with bats
and we may include them in *BatMann* or
the website.

Bat boxes

Help build bat boxes and check on those
already placed around the island.

Roost checks and surveys

Help us monitor bat activity and habitat
during checks of known roost sites,
looking for new roosts, eg bridge surveys,
and by helping with structured surveys,
such as car surveys and Bat Search.

Bat care

Become a trained bat worker so you can
care for grounded and injured bats, or
bats disturbed during building works. Full
training is available for this role.

Feedback on the new Bat Group structure

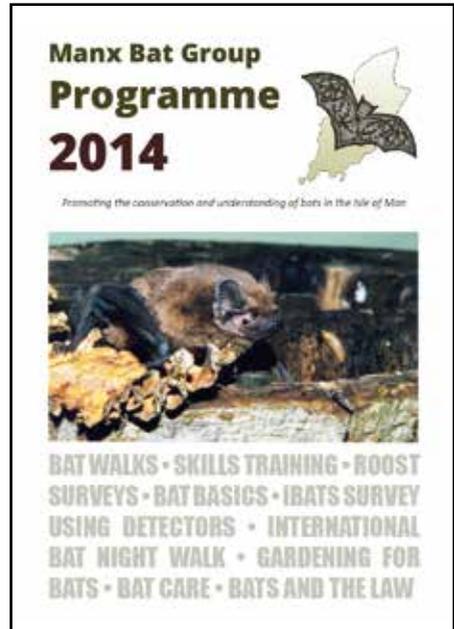
You may have noticed that the structure of our Bat Group activities changed in 2014, following our discussion at the 2013 AGM. We began a new format of regular monthly indoor meetings for training and wider discussion of bat-related matters, as well as continuing our fieldwork surveys, some bat walks and outreach work such as talks to groups and information stalls at the summer shows. We hope that members have found this new set-up beneficial.

After some feedback and review, we intend to continue this format in 2015, but with a few improvements. We will have a slot for discussion of short items at the start of each session, and the general event will follow. This will also be the time to catch up with what other members have been doing, report bats in care and new bat or roost records, and deal with any formal Bat Group business.

It is hoped that this will encourage an awareness of and involvement in the wider issues dealt with by the Group, which in previous years have been discussed only within the committee.

All feedback on this new format is encouraged as we find out what works best for our members and for our bat work. If you have issues or ideas that you wish to raise at any monthly meeting, please contact the secretary or chairperson beforehand so that these can be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

We discussed having small working/project groups to take forward different aspects of our work. This will allow members with particular enthusiasms or skills to take forward specific projects.



We hope all members will join in our monthly discussions and training opportunities on batty issues

For example, we need a group to focus on news, publications and social media. A project was suggested to raise more awareness of bats among people working in pest control and the building trades. We also need to develop our pool of people available and trained to do bat care. And we are always looking for volunteers to talk to schools and community groups about bats.

So don't be shy. We want the Bat Group to be really active and to develop with members' interests and abilities. Have a think about what you'd like to delve into a bit deeper with the help of some Bat Group friends.

Richard Selman & Margaret Hunter

DEFA update October 2014

What has been happening on the bat front in government in the past year or so, you might well ask? The following are some matters that have arisen at or via the office that might interest members.

New species for Port St Mary

In May last year, a dead Natterer's bat was a surprise find in the centre of Port St Mary (St Mary's Avenue) with severe wing membrane damage on one side. This is our first record for that area and not a site where we might expect to find them. The occurrence of this species there deserves some further investigation, so if you live in that area... Thanks to Bob Taylor and Paddy of the fish market for bringing this to our attention.



Wildlife Act

A bat issue was brought to our attention regarding the destruction of a building where a bat was found during works. While there was no evidence on the bat matter, the investigation did result in a formal caution for bird offences during the same work, and there is now better communication between the contractor and the department and a greater awareness of the legislation.

Electric bats

Recent work at the Manx Utilities electricity substation at St John's has shown bat roosting activity and liaison is ongoing regarding maintenance work at the site, which is being undertaken under licence and in a bat-friendly manner. A number of substations have bats, being warm and relatively undisturbed. It will be useful to determine what is using this roost site and when.

Bats on holiday?

Reroofing is proposed at the brown long-eared roost in Kewaigue School, but this has been postponed. DEFA and the DEC are looking at options for housing the bats during the work, which must take place during the summer holidays, providing a significant challenge.

Bat exclusion

Meanwhile, previously postponed work at Westlands in Peel, where pipistrelles roost in the boiler house, went ahead this year in May, and the bats were excluded while asbestos was removed from the building. This had to be done in the warm months with the heating switched off, but avoiding exclusion while the young were present.

With multiple entry points, the exclusion was not simple. A box was provided but there were no signs of use, though it had to go on a north-facing wall, which is not ideal.

In the longer term this building is earmarked for demolition, so we will be looking at alternative housing options for bats at this site.



Biodiversity Strategy

On the strategic side, now that we are signed up to the Convention on Biological Diversity, an Isle of Man Biodiversity Strategy is currently progressing through Tynwald, and this may result in work streams relating to topics such as policy, education and awareness, and monitoring.

There are opportunities here for the involvement of groups outside of government. Taxon and habitat groups have been set up to recommend priority actions, including a group covering land mammals.

The habitat groups cover woodland, farmland, grassland, coastal, urban and industrial, and upland. A raft of species plans is not required, as we are adopting a more flexible approach.

Actions can be planned for a specific species or on a broader basis, with a focus on priorities and achievable actions and links between taxon and habitat groups.

We hope that this will make best use of the available expertise and time, without getting mired in the planning stages or losing touch with either the habitat angle or the needs of high-priority species.

If you are doing work that supports bat conservation or related elements of the Strategy then please contact your committee so that this can be taken into account and due credit given.

Richard Selman

Bats in care

Our Bat Helpline assists members of the public who find grounded or injured bats. A Group member then attends as soon as possible to assess whether the bat can be released or has to be taken into care. Here are some of this year's more notable cases:

- The staff at Milntown found a female pipistrelle grounded inside the main house. It had no apparent injuries, and at first took food and water, so two release attempts were made, but with no success. The bat then refused food and died within a short time of being taken into care. However, we did manage to take a video of this bat feeding when first received, which is a good demonstration of how we care for poorly bats. If you haven't seen it yet on our Facebook page, have a look or see it here: youtu.be/A11XjOylouQ.
- Another pipistrelle found on the ground in Peel was similarly reluctant to feed despite no apparent injuries. Sometimes grounded bats are simply dehydrated and recover quickly with care, but at other times their demise remains a mystery.
- On a better note, a Leisler's bat was recovered from a property in Ballasalla where it had become stuck in a bath and was unable to get out. Luckily, it was successfully released.
- Continuing the bathroom hazard theme, we were called to a bat that had been found dead in a toilet in Foxdale. So, keep the lid down!
- Two pipistrelles that had been in care for several months were successfully released in Union Mills.

Bat Helpline: 366177

Bat records 2014

Writing up a summary of bat records for 2014, I noticed that a bat received into care and found at Majestic Apartments, Onchan, was the 30th record for the year and the 11th live bat in the hand, as it were, seen by the Group.

I was wondering if the number of bats handed in had grown proportionately in recent years, as the annual number of records has declined, and it does seem as if it might have. The most recent five years have seen an average of 30 per cent of our records coming from bats examined in the hand (and mostly taken in to care), while the five years 2004–08 averaged 22.4 per cent. In the two best years for records, 1999 and 2000, when we received 131 and 116 records respectively, only 15 per cent of records were generated by bats in the hand.

For 2014 the bulk of the other records came in from Bat Group events, either public walks or surveys. So there is great scope for members to get out in summer, with or without their detectors, to watch bats and, when they get home, complete one or more record forms to cover their observations.

There have been some notable records in recent years. At a quick glance, the records for the most recent five years include 15 new maternity roosts and 15 updates on previously known roosts. One member has been observing bats in her housing estate in Tromode (*see article on page 9*) and has nailed down which houses the maternity roost moves between at intervals, and it will be fascinating to see if we can work out just why maternity roosts should move in this way.



Similarly, the Leisler's colony in Union Mills/The Strang seems to move between two or three houses, but with apparently greater separation than the Tromode pipistrelles.

This seems to have been the year of the Leisler's, with 16 records, nearly a third of the total, and 4 of those were in-hand specimens. The records were mostly from the north (St Jude's, Sulby, Ballaugh Glen and Ramsey), but others were from Douglas, Onchan and Silverdale, showing it is a very widespread species, if not as common as the percentage of records might seem to indicate.

Aside from increasing our own knowledge of the distribution and numbers of bats in the Island, the major use for the bat records is in planning and development control, given that bats and bat roosts are protected in law. Richard Selman often deals directly with planning applications, consulting either the database or the Recorder, and we are also often asked by architects for information on specific buildings. A more recent trend has been for consultants to request information for environmental impact assessments they are preparing for more commercial and industrial developments, and for all of these we like to provide as accurate a picture as we can.

Other groups and organisations are also interested in bat distribution and I reported in a recent issue of *BatMann* how records were submitted to the GB Mammal Atlas scheme. Eventually, when verified and 'cleaned', the records will be submitted to the National Biodiversity Network, and indeed some have already been posted on that site.

Hopefully, next year we will be concentrating on roost counts for known roosts and so will improve on these figures. Meanwhile, I urge everyone to look back through their notebooks or rack their memories and think whether or not they have any records that could be submitted for inclusion in the database. It's never too late!

Nick Pinder, Recorder

Using the National Biodiversity Network



Ever wondered what bats (or other fauna and flora) you might encounter in your trips across? Did you know that you can search the records on the National Biodiversity Network database for free?

The NBN Gateway provides access to species records and information supplied by various organisations across the British Isles. Our Isle of Man records will in time be in this database too, via the Manx Biological Recording Partnership, so the more information you can send us, the better our bats will be represented!

You can find information on species taxonomy, current designation status, a list of sites, national and local maps of species records, and species reports for sites and 10km grid squares. If you search by species, bats are listed under 'terrestrial mammal', or you can search on the name of the species you are looking for.

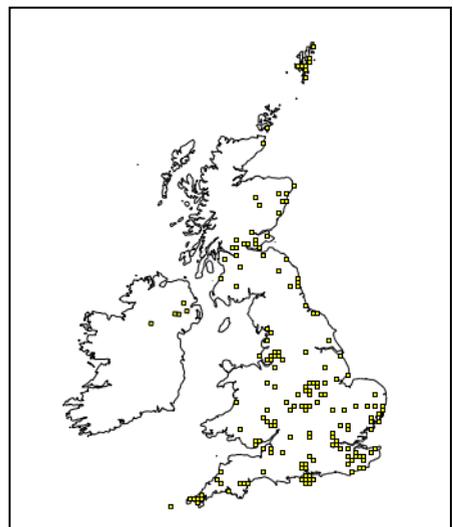
The NBN site also has lots of other useful resources and information, such as where to find ID guides, a list of local record centres, a habitat dictionary and a species inventory.

There are also various 'how-to' guides and a forum containing help on how to use the site.

nbn.org.uk

manxbiodiversity.org/MBRP.html

*An example of species records from the National Biodiversity Network – *Nathusius's pipistrelle* (none yet for the Isle of Man!)*



Someone has blown up this bat!

As some of you will know, I have spent a lot of time recently speculating on the possibility of an eighth species for the Isle of Man. It really is only a matter of time, I am sure, before somebody gets handed a grounded pipistrelle that looks a little bit larger than usual, ideally has a forearm length over 35mm and a 5th digit to forearm ratio greater than 1:25, and we will then claim Nathusius's pipistrelle as part of the Manx fauna.

So my interest was roused as I read Nick's text asking to borrow mealworms as he had acquired an 'unusual-looking pipistrelle' from Onchan via the MSPCA. We arranged to meet, as we were both due to attend the Manx Biodiversity Forum at St John's that evening.

The pip turned out to be enormous, but there was something very odd about her. Although big and round, at a mere 4g she was also seriously underweight! Nick and I both had difficulty believing her forearm measurement, which was below the bottom end of the normal pipistrelle range at 27mm.

Another really strange thing was her generally bloated appearance. In the hand, she felt as though the skin under her fur was tightly inflated like a balloon. This puffy feeling was the same all over her body – abdomen, chest, back, shoulders, even the top of her head! Imagine if you will a Tom and Jerry cartoon when Tom swallows an air hose and Jerry turns on the pump, transforming Tom into a cat-shaped balloon...

The bat was passive, listless and dull, making little attempt at movement. I agreed to take her into care to see if a spell of rest, food and water could bring

about any improvement. After a couple of days, as there was no change in her condition, I took her to see Kate, one of the Milan vets in Douglas, to see if she could suggest a course of action.

Kate explained that the bat's condition was most likely to have resulted from a 'blunt trauma' injury. Perhaps she had been hit by a car or some other fast-moving object? The puffiness was caused by air between the skin and the underlying tissues, and there didn't appear to be any broken bones or signs of infection. The vet had never before seen such an extreme case of inflation in a small animal.

"Would you like to see something very unusual?" Kate called in one of her colleagues to take a look too. "Someone has blown up this bat!" The vets agreed it was worth trying to expel the trapped air, so Kate used the smallest needle available to try to deflate the pipistrelle. Several syringes full of air were drawn off, and I watched with fascination as the bat shrank dramatically before our eyes. An amazing total of over 10ml of air was drawn off before the pip was restored to her normal size.

The transformation was dramatic and immediate. As soon as her skin was shrink-wrapped back onto her normal shape, the bat seemed to wake up from her former lethargy. She is now an active and energetic bat. She is still seriously undernourished but shows every sign of being on the road to recovery.

Bob Moon

The pips of Tromode woods

June started very quiet this year in Tromode woods... no sign of any bats in last year's maternity roost. However, there were still bats around.

While observing the empty roost I was interested to see bats flying past it. I walked around the corner to try to see where they were coming from, as it was still only 25 minutes after sunset. I was excited to discover a few coming out of the house two doors away, which backs onto the known roost.

The next night I set out at sunset to watch my new discovery. For every bat I watched coming out, several more seemed to fly past, which made me suspect that there was more than one new house hosting the bats! By now several neighbours were interested and joined me to count, but we only got 6 definite common pips.

On the third consecutive night I decided to step back across the road and observe from a distance, and bingo! – I witnessed bats emerging from another house across the road. All three houses are less than 50 metres apart as the crow flies.



My bat numbers for this house were above 30. Later that week, on 13th June, I went back at exactly sunset and it wasn't long before my count began: 1... 2... 10... 20... 30... and all the way up to 90!

The owners came out to observe for a bit but soon went back in to watch the latest World Cup football match on TV. The first roost had 30+ bats three summers ago, 60+ last summer, and now only a stone's throw away I had found 90+! It's hard to count accurately as darkness descends so I count on the mean side.

By 13th July the numbers were down to 36, and a month later no sign of any bats. It's an exciting discovery and I am looking forward with anticipation to 2015 in the hope that numbers continue to rise and that I can find them early on.

The strangest thing that I witnessed in Tromode woods this year, towards the end of August, was a black cat on the roof of yet another house. It was sitting staring at the lead flashing and, although the bats were definitely not out and about that night, I suspect the cat knows something about that house that I can't yet confirm! Watch this space next year.



Nicola Evans

Bat box schemes update

West Baldwin reservoir

Earlier this year eight Kent-style bat boxes were secured to trees in the Colden Plantation on the edge of the West Baldwin reservoir.

Timber for the boxes was provided by DEFA Sawmill and the boxes were assembled by Bill Denard, Adam Denard and Peter McEvoy. The boxes were erected by DEFA Forestry staff George Gatsby and Malcolm O'Neil at a height of approximately 3m on Scot's pine in a position where they will receive some sunshine during the day and with a clear flight path to and from the box.

Three young people from The Children's Centre's MOBEX project who had made their own bat boxes came along to watch the boxes being put up and find out how to correctly position their bat

boxes to maximise uptake. Nick Pinder, Manx Bat Group Treasurer, brought a rescued pipistrelle bat along to show the young people and their instructors. Nick gave a short talk about bat ecology and behaviour. One young man was particularly interested in the rescued bat and it's great to see young people having the opportunity to engage with and learn about wildlife.

West Baldwin should be perfect habitat for bats with plenty of flying insect food over the reservoir. However, the surrounding conifer plantation has limited roosting opportunities and it is hoped that any bats coming into the area will make the boxes their homes. The boxes will be checked for occupancy in 2015. If anyone sees bats in the vicinity of the boxes, or bat droppings on the landing board of the boxes, then please let the Manx Bat Group know.

Many thanks to everyone involved in this project.

Louise Samson

South Barrule plantation

Five dedicated souls (Adam Denard, Richard and Ruth Fryer, Louise Samson and Louise's mum, Janet Samson) braved almost winter-like conditions for the July Bat Group meeting.

The purpose of the evening was to undertake a summer check of the 10 boxes that have been put up in and around the 'Ape Mann' area of South Barrule plantation.

As the boxes have been in place since winter 2013/14, it was hoped that suitable time had elapsed for any bats using the area to have become accustomed to



George securing a Kent-style box to a Scot's pine overlooking the reservoir

the boxes, have checked them out and decided they were a 'des res' worthy of raising youngsters in. Alas, despite the placing of boxes in suitable habitat for a significant period, there were no signs of use. Not even the odd poo to suggest a transient stopover.

The evening was not done yet, and from sunset onwards we decamped to the forest rides and immediate surroundings of the DEFA outdoor classroom by the Forestry cottage. Although the rain had stopped and the ambient temperature hovered around 15°C, there was disappointingly little dusk activity, with only a few feeding passes of a solitary common pipistrelle. This carried on until 90 minutes after sunset, by which time the midges had well and truly feasted on the surveyors.

Although we drew a blank this time, I would like to thank the attendees for their much-needed help, and through some discussion and afterthought, there are several key points to now consider:

- More boxes are needed to increase coverage within suitable habitat.
- Different aspects on the same tree could be used to provide more varied micro-climates in the boxes.
- There is plenty of scope to experiment with new box designs and materials, so any willing bat box constructors are welcome! Timber-based models have the added advantage that we may be able to acquire more generous donations of materials from DEFA.
- Given the lack of roosting opportunities in the immediate vicinity, bats may well use the area later in the evening than dusk. Future activity surveys should go on longer into the night to increase the likelihood of recording bat activity.

If anyone is interested in assisting with the scheme, please contact Adam Denard:

Email: adamdenard45@hotmail.com

Tel: 242442

Adam Denard

Bat box challenge!

Can you come up with a great new design for a bat box?

What materials could we put to new use to make an innovative bat home?

Have a look at the links below for inspiration then send us your ideas (or pictures of your designs or finished bat boxes!).

- bats.org.uk/pages/bat_boxes.html
- batcon.org/resources/for-specific-issues/artificial-roosts
(free download of *The Bat House Builder's Handbook*)
- vwt.org.uk/docs/bats/design-of-the-cjm-batbox.pdf?sfvrsn=4
- which.co.uk/documents/pdf/diy-bat-box-153999.pdf
- cwf-fcf.org/en/do-something/challenges-projects/take-action-factsheets/outside/putting-up-a-bat-house.html
- batcon.org/pdfs/bathouses/SingleChamberBHPlans.pdf
- batsnorthwest.org/rocketbox_plans.pdf
- discoverwildlife.com/wildlife-gardens/how-attract-bats-your-garden

***Send your bat box ideas to:
info@manxbatgroup.org***

White-nose syndrome – further GB evidence



White-nose syndrome has devastated hibernating bat populations in the eastern United States and is now spreading west. It is caused by a fungus, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (formerly *Geomyces destructans*). This has raised concerns in Europe and questions about its origins. In Britain, surveys have turned up a second bat that has tested positive for the fungus, from a swab taken during hibernation earlier in 2014, a Daubenton's bat from Norfolk. The previous case was in 2013, and there have been positive samples from the substrate of five bat sites in Kent and Sussex.

The latest information suggests that the fungus is probably European in origin, but that European bats are not so susceptible, presumably due to long evolution with the European strain. The fungus has not been recorded on the Isle of Man, but neither have any tests been made, to my knowledge. However, we have not recorded any large hibernation roost in recent years, and the question

of where our bats hibernate remains somewhat mysterious, though there are records of small numbers hibernating in mines, ruins and buildings. The only truly huge bat roost was destroyed many years ago, prior to bat protection legislation.

Since the syndrome began taking its toll in the US, British bat workers have been asked to look out for bats showing signs of this fungus. This forms part of a wider European survey which is ongoing. BCT guidelines have been produced to cover such hibernaculum checks. There has also been a Eurobats Agreement Resolution (the agreement covering bat conservation in Europe, under the Bonn Convention on migratory species), Resolution 6.6, that seeks to minimise the risk of the pathogen moving from North America to European bat hibernacula, monitor European hibernacula for the presence of fungi growing on bats, promote the referral of any such fungi for investigation and, if bat deaths occur, minimise the spread of the fungus by humans.

Mass deaths are not currently expected in Europe, but please be aware of the risk of fungi in caves and hibernacula, and if you visit tourist caves abroad or other large bat sites, avoid being an agent for spore movement between countries by cleaning your shoes and clothes thoroughly between visits. Those of us keen to see bats across the world could unwittingly bring in a foreign strain, which might be more virulent; but don't let that stop you encouraging bat conservation by supporting controlled tourism projects that protect bats and help the communities that conserve them.

Richard Selman

Photo © NPS

Do new species await the keen and alert?

We have previously noted in *BatMann* the recording of Alcathoe bat in the UK, a species only recently recognised by science, with further records expected now that DNA identification is taking off. There are also increasing numbers of records of Nathusius's pipistrelle in the UK, and Bob Moon has been leading the search here. New appearances, or just looking in the right place at the right time with a keener eye?

Well, now there have been two records of Geoffroy's bat from the UK. *Myotis emarginatus* is more usually found across the Channel, but a male was recorded in West Sussex in September 2012, and in September 2013 a male was found at Brown's Folly, an SSSI with disused mines, ancient woodland and meadows, near Bath, where 13 of the 17 resident British bat species have previously been recorded. A veritable bat idyll, I imagine. Geoffroy's has a notched ear, so would hopefully be noticed if you were ever lucky enough to have one in the hand.

These don't appear to be seaside visitors, either.

But what does this mean for us? Whilst we might not expect a Geoffroy's in the immediate future, we should keep our eyes and our minds open to the possibility of new species being placed in front of us, either as vagrants, or possibly even as previously unrecognised residents. With a lesser horseshoe turning up in November a few years ago, who knows what the late season movements might produce? Savi's pipistrelles and parti-coloured bats occasionally turn up in Britain, though rare migrants tend to be reported from coastal locations facing the Continent. In the same way, though, we should expect those British species that we don't tend to see on the Isle of Man nevertheless potentially turning up if the conditions allow it, and especially so now that we are seeing species edging northwards. What might a southerly wind bring in next?

Richard Selman



A parti-coloured bat (*Vespertilio murinus*). Photo © Rudo Jureček



Do we have your up-to-date email?

As we now send out regular newsletters and information by email, please let us know if you change your email address. And if you haven't yet given us your email address, please let us know if you have one. It means that you get news quicker but it also saves us postage and printing costs! Add info@manxbatgroup.org to your address book so our messages don't end up in your junk/spam folder.

Bats in Captivity guide

Basically Bats has a free guide to *Bats In Captivity*. While this is a US publication it makes a useful addition to the BCT Bat Care Guidelines and the Bat Rescue Manual (West Yorkshire Bat Hospital). basicallybats.org/onlinebook/contents.htm

Bat care recording form

The Group has drawn up a new form for recording the details and progress of grounded and injured bats in care. If you are engaged in bat care please download the form from the website and print off a supply to use for each bat you look after. It records important information such as where and by whom the bat was found, physical measurements and species, care treatment and outcome. Completed forms should be returned to our Recorder (records@manxbatgroup.org). manxbatgroup.org/index.php/bat-help/injured-bats

Bats have 2nd homes (& 3rd...?)

A study in a woodland in Oxfordshire has shown that bats 'move house' frequently, often every couple of days, and that they choose to roost alongside other bats in their social group in separate but adjacent areas. (Bats need friends?) They also stay within a limited geographical area, which raises important considerations for conservation and woodland felling.

sciencedaily.com/

releases/2014/10/141030142240.htm

Designing for Biodiversity

BCT and RIBA have published an updated guide on how to incorporate provision for biodiversity within building projects and developments. It also has input from the RSPB, Swift Conservation, Action for Swifts, Barn Owl Trust and Buglife and is described as 'an invaluable resource for all architects, ecologists and anyone involved in designing or briefing for biodiversity in buildings'.

ribabookshops.com/item/designing-for-biodiversity-a-technical-guide-for-new-and-existing-buildings-2nd-edition/79859/

ribabookshops.com/item/designing-for-biodiversity-a-technical-guide-for-new-and-existing-buildings-2nd-edition/79859/





A batty festive gift?

Stuck for a Christmas present for a batty loved one? Why not order a Manx Bat Group T-shirt featuring our lovely celtic-style bat? Available in sizes small, medium, large and extra-large, they cost just £10 if you pick them up at a Bat Group meeting (otherwise add £3 postage). Order soon if you need it before Christmas!

We also have bat-themed cards and gifts in our bat shop, so please ask for details if you're looking for batty gifts.

Call Margaret on 877919 or email your order to info@manxbatgroup.org.

Help needed to fund bat research

BCT is supporting a crowd-funding project to raise money to continue research into bats and breathable roofing membranes. Stacey Waring, the research engineer leading this work, has now completed her doctoral research and is aiming to do more research to eventually develop bat-friendly remedial measures and products. You have until 15th December to support the funding attempt.

More details: bats.org.uk/news.php/251/bats_and_breathable_roofing_membranes

Funding info: indiegogo.com/projects/bats-and-modern-roofing-membranes-research

Bats jam competitors' calls to steal their prey

Scientists have discovered that some bats have learned how to 'jam' the feeding buzzes made by other bats when they are hunting. The bats tune into the calls and emit a siren-like noise that effectively jams the hunting bats' signals so that they lose track of their prey. The clever jammers then swoop in and snatch the insect for themselves.

Research in Arizona showed that over 85% of attacks on insects failed when the bats' capture attempts were jammed by other bats. Similar behaviour has been found among Mexican free-tailed bats.

The same scientists previously showed that tiger moths can jam the hunting calls of brown bats, but say this is the first time that this type of competitive interference among individuals of the same species has been discovered in animals.

news.sciencemag.org/biology/2014/11/holy-blocked-bat-signal-bats-jam-each-others-calls

Watch a video about the jamming behaviour: youtube.com/watch?v=sCREM26yMbU&feature=youtu.be

An unusual choice of roost!

Small Hardwicke's woolly bats (*Kerivoula hardwickii*) have been found roosting inside carnivorous pitcher plants in Borneo. The plants provide a safe place for the bats (above the digestive juices!) that is also free from parasites. The plants also gain, says Dr Ulmar Grafe, by using the bats' waste: "The pitcher plant benefits from attracting the bat because the bats defecate into the pitcher, using it as a toilet."

news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth_news/newsid_9372000/9372874.stm

2015 programme preview

Monthly Bat Group meetings

We aim to continue our FIRST WEDNESDAY monthly meetings (except June to avoid TT). Until further notice these will be from 7.30pm in Knockaloe classroom, Patrick. We await news on the future of Knockaloe with interest!

Topics for 2015 will include:

- species identification (by sight and sound)
- using sound analysis software
- practical bat care
- how to identify actual and potential roost sites
- bats and biodiversity

We will use the summer meetings in June to August to get out in the field and carry out counts at known bat roosts.

Each monthly meeting will begin with a 30-minute round-up of bat news and Group information sharing so everyone can keep up to date.



Special guest speaker

Wednesday 1st April 2015 Lisa Worledge from BCT (the Bat Conservation Trust) will be speaking to the group at our April meeting. Don't miss it as she's great! The topic is likely to be Bats and Science.

Bat walks

We will be leading public bat walks during the summer months from May to October in various locations around the island. Check our website and Facebook page for details.

Saturday 29th August 2015 is International Bat Night and we will celebrate with a public walk around Andreas. Full details to follow.

Bat surveys

If you are interested in getting involved in our bat surveys over the summer please contact info@manxbatgroup.org or phone the relevant coordinator below for details. We hope to place special emphasis in 2015 on roost counts so need as many volunteers as possible. No experience needed as basic training and equipment will be provided.

- **June to August:** Bat roost checks and counts (Nick Pinder 897499)
- **June & July:** Leisler's bat roosts (Richard Selman 877919)
- **Wednesday 1st July:** roost count at Tromode (see article page 9)
- **July & August:** iBats – car-based surveys (Richard Fryer 861436)
- **September:** Nathusius's pipistrelle surveys (Bob Moon 612067)

We will also be hosting information stalls at the Tynwald Fair and agricultural shows. If you can volunteer to help, please get in touch at info@manxbatgroup.org.