Devon Bat Survey Report

2017

Introduction

Thank you for taking part in the Devon Bat Survey. The records that you have helped to provide will help us to work out how bats are using our landscape. This survey is being run as part of the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project, which is a 5 year partnership project of 18 organisations led by Devon Wildlife Trust and is supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund, as well as other funders.

There are 18 species of bat in Britain and they all have different needs, so some are more likely to be found in dark, rural areas such as the greater horseshoe bat, and others are happy in towns and cities, like the common pipistrelle. All the bats in the UK eat insects, so they are great natural pest controllers! This means that their droppings are made up of tiny bits of insect, so they are crumbly and dry.

Bats find their prey through echolocation - this is where the bat calls at a very high frequency (most humans cannot hear this - although children are sometimes able to) and listens for the return call as it bounces off an object. Horseshoe bats have a special nose-leaf that is shaped like a horseshoe which helps them to direct their calls. This helps them to build up a map of their surroundings and find their prey. It is these calls that the bat detector you borrowed has recorded, and many of these are distinctive to a particular bat, or a group of bats, allowing us to work out what species have been detected.

This report will tell you what bats have flown past your detector. It does not give an exact number of bats, but tells you how many times a bat of each species has been recorded passing by - it could be one bat flying past lots of times! It will also give you some information on each species of bat.

We hope that you have enjoyed taking part in the survey and will take part again next year.

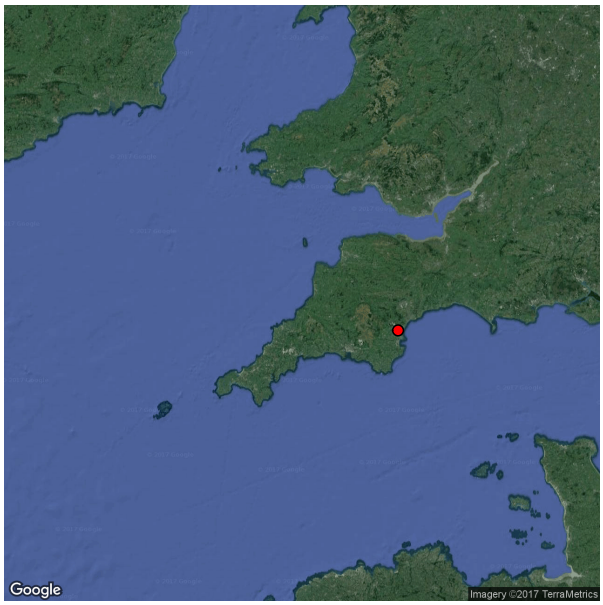
Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project Team

Survey Details:

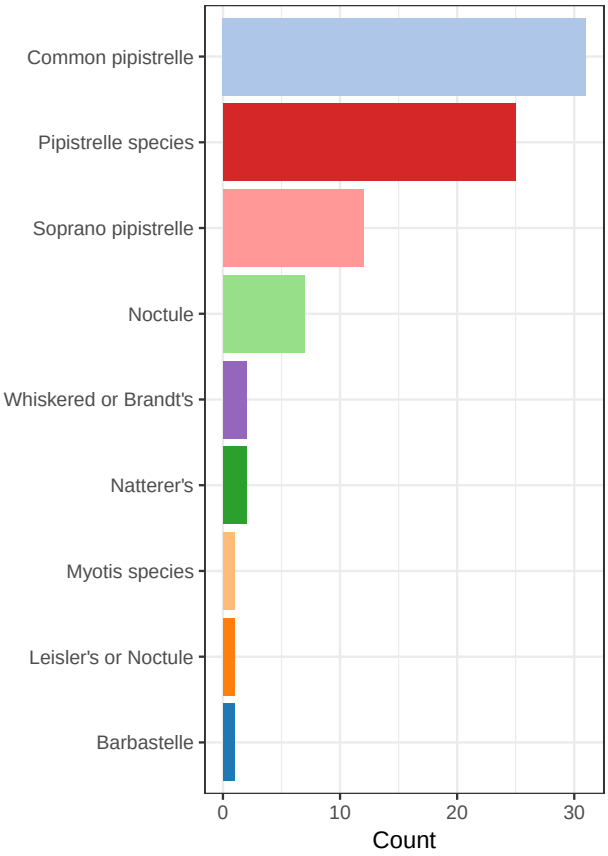
Date of Survey: 13 April 2014
Surname of surveyor: Ripper
Location: Wheatland Farm
SD card number: 17.399999999999999

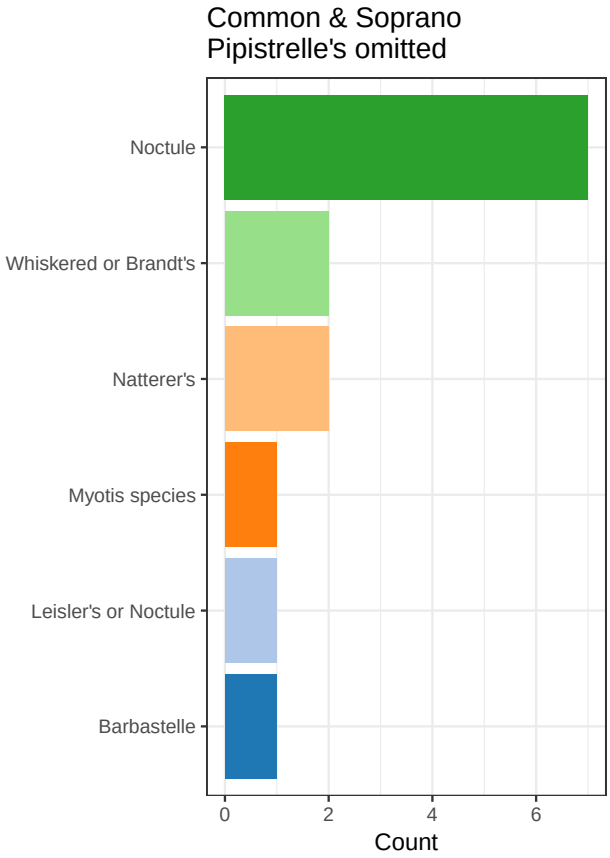
Survey Results

Location: Wheatland Farm



Species	Bat Passes (Nr)
Common pipistrelle	31
Pipistrelle species	25
Soprano pipistrelle	12
Noctule	7
Natterer's	2
Whiskered or Brandt's	2
Barbastelle	1
Leisler's or Noctule	1
Myotis species	1





Below is some information on the species which were found on your survey. For more information please visit the Bat Conservation Trust website http://www.bats.org.uk.

Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
The barbastelle is a distinctive looking medium-sized bat. It has a pug-shaped nose and broad ears which join across the top of the head, and its fur is very dark with "frosted" tips. It prefers woodland, roosting in trees and hunting both beneath the canopy and over tree-tops but can also be found over rough meadows, ponds and streams.

Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*
Common pipistrelles are the most common and widespread of all British bat species. They are found in lots of places, including towns and cities, as well as in the countryside. They are small, and their flight is fast and jerky as they pursue small insects which they catch and eat whilst flying. A single pipistrelle can consume up to 3,000 insects in one night!

Leisler's or Noctule
These two bats belong to the same family, and are fairly large for a British bat. The noctule is generally one of the first bats to be seen of an evening, and they like to hunt over open ground, particularly pasture. Leisler's are more likely to be found in woodland, but they can also be found in the same places as noctules-making them hard to tell apart!

Myotis Species
The Myotis are a group of bats which includes Alcathoe, Bechstein's, Brandt's, Daubenton's, Natterer's and Whiskered bats. They all make very similar sounds which mean that sometimes it is very hard to tell them apart from their recordings alone.

Natterer's Bat *Myotis nattereri*
This medium-sized species has long, slightly curved ears, and a fringe of very stiff bristles along the trailing edge of its broad tail membrane. Natterer's bat is highly agile in tight spaces, making quick, sharp turns. This means it can hunt very close to vegetation, picking up insects off leaves and twigs and catching insects flying close to dense vegetation. They tend to hunt in dense woodland, along tree-lined rivers and over water bodies, but are also found in woodland clearings, meadows and parkland.

Pipistrelle Species
There are 3 species of pipistrelle that are commonly found in the UK, the common, soprano and Nathusius'. They are the smallest of the British bats, with both the common and soprano likely to be found in most areas - including the middle to towns and cities. The Nathusius' is a rarer, migratory bat, normally found near water.

Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
The soprano pipistrelle was discovered as a different species to the common pipistrelle in the 1990s - they are very similar but they use slightly different echolocation calls and there are subtle differences in how they look. They also tend to roost and hunt in slightly different places, with the soprano pipistrelle favouring river habitat and wetland areas.

Whiskered or Brandt's
Whiskered and Brandt's bats are very similar in appearance, both are small with slightly shaggy fur - and Brandt's is normally a bit bigger, but often DNA analysis is the only way to tell them apart. They are often found in slightly different areas; whiskered bats are mostly found in open wooded country, often near water, whilst Brandt's feed through the night at low heights in woodland, parks, meadows and near water bodies.

The code that geneated this report, from the analysied survey data, was produced by Steve Markham of Devon Bat Group and Marquis & Lord Ltd.

DWT ref: 014

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Funding raised by The National Lottery and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund
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