



Find out more about the Bats in Scotland

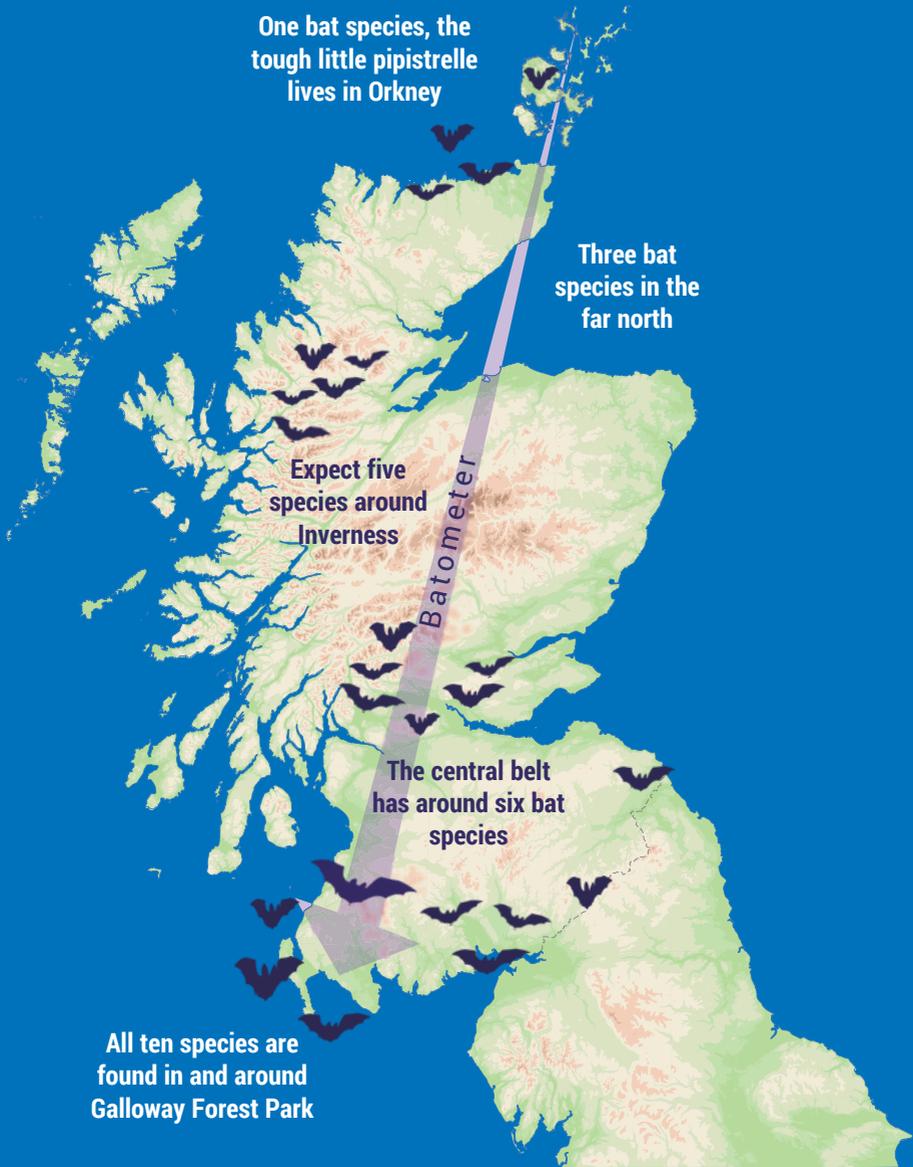
One bat species, the tough little pipistrelle lives in Orkney

Three bat species in the far north

Expect five species around Inverness

The central belt has around six bat species

All ten species are found in and around Galloway Forest Park



Which bats live in Scotland?

There are 17 species of bat living and breeding in the UK. Ten species are tough enough to survive in Scotland.



Soprano Pipistrelle

The **soprano pipistrelle** is Scotland's most common bat and the one you are most likely to have sharing your house. On a warm summer's night look out for them, with their characteristically erratic flight, as they are busily feeding on small insects in our gardens and parks.

The **common pipistrelle** is the toughest bat of them all. It is more common than the soprano pipistrelle in the north of Scotland where it is found roosting on the wind-swept Isles of Orkney and individuals have been spotted on Shetland. This bat likes to roost in buildings too.

Common Pipistrelle



Nathusius' Pipistrelle

The **Nathusius' pipistrelle** is slightly larger than the much more commonly found common and soprano pipistrelles. It is a winter migrant with most bats encountered in autumn. Since the 1990s they have been known to remain all year and breed in the UK. It is likely only a matter of time before a breeding roost is confirmed in Scotland.

Brown long-eared bats are common in Scotland. They need big open loft spaces with woodland close by when they roost in buildings. Moths are an important part of their diet and they have to echolocate quietly so as not to alert their prey. This has given them the nickname "whispering bat".



Brown Long-eared Bat



Noctule

The **noctule** is the biggest, noisiest and fastest bat in Scotland. It can fly at 30mph, it shouts four times louder than the legal limit for a nightclub and is bold enough to emerge before sunset. They live in the south of Scotland where they roost in trees.

The **Leisler's bat** is slightly smaller than the noctule with a restricted breeding range in the south west of Scotland. It feeds primarily on flies and, unlike the noctule, can sometimes be found roosting in buildings. They like woodland and pasture as well as river and stream habitats to feed.



Leisler's Bat

Daubenton's Bat



The **Daubenton's bat** is common and widespread. They feed by skimming low over slow flowing water taking insects from the air and water's surface. Also known as the Water bat, they do not roost far away from their feeding grounds and are more likely to roost in trees and bridges than buildings.

The **Natterer's bat** is not fussy when it comes to food. They feed on a wide range of insects from moths to spiders which they can pluck from vegetation. They are absent from the north Scottish mainland and the western and northern islands favouring our parks, large gardens and woodlands.



Natterer's Bat

Whiskered Bat



The **whiskered** bat is rare, found only in the south of Scotland. They prefer woodland and river habitats to feed and are found hunting in woodland clearings, hedgerows and along streams and tree lines. Flies make up a big part of their diet but they will also feed on moths and beetles.

The **Brandt's bat** is Scotland's rarest. It is not thought to range far into Scotland at all and currently the only evidence of a roost in Scotland is from droppings found in a building in Galloway in 2014. More work needs to be done to determine their status in Scotland.



Brandt's Bat

Where do bats live?

The natural place for a bat to roost is in a tree, cave or rock face but many trees have been cut down so bats have adapted to using man-made structures like bridges and houses too.

Summer Roosts

-  Female bats gather together in warm maternity roosts around May.
-  Each bat will give birth to one baby (called a pup) in early summer.
-  The pup feeds on milk and young start flying from about three weeks.
-  By the end of August the maternity colony moves to other locations and forms smaller roosts.



Female brown long-eared bats gathered in their maternity roost.

Winter Roosts

-  During winter bats need cool, frost-free, humid and undisturbed sites for hibernation.
-  We still don't know where all bats hibernate. We find only small numbers in winter, usually in underground sites, in thick stone walls or in trees.



Hibernating brown long-eared bat.

How do bats hunt in the dark?

All bats in the UK feed on insects. Bats are not blind but at night their ears are more useful to them than their eyes.

As they fly they 'shout' and then listen for an echo. The bats use the echoes to build a sound picture of what is ahead of them. They can tell the size and shape of objects this way and, if an object is moving, how fast it is going and in which direction.

This process is called echo-location. Most of the calls the bats make are too high-pitched for human ears. However we can tune in to bat calls by listening on a bat detector.

Different bats have different calls and bat detector sounds range from dry clicks to wet slappy sounds.



Flowers + trees + water = insects → Bats

When bats 'home in' on an insect they make a series of very fast calls. This is described as a 'feeding buzz'.

Where to spot Scotland's bats



The best places to watch bats are where there are lots of insects. Areas with trees and fresh water are especially good.



When?

The best time to watch for bats is around sunset or just before dawn on a warm and calm summer's night. It means staying up very late and beware, in some parts of Scotland this is when midge numbers are at their greatest too!



What to spot

- 1 **Pipistrelles feeding over seaweed.**
- 2 **The most northerly Natterer's bats near Tain.**
- 3 **Daubenton's bats at Ness Islands (Inverness).**
- 4 **Pipistrelles at sunset.**
- 5 **Aristocratic brown long-eared bats at Crathes Castle.**
- 6 **Noisy noctules over the river Tweed.**
- 7 **Look out for Leisler's in Wood of Cree.**
- 8 **Visit the National Trust for Scotland's Threave Bat Reserve for a self-guided bat walk.**



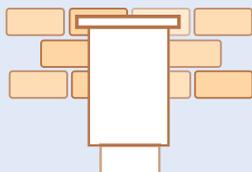
How can I help bats in Scotland?



Join your local bat group



Volunteer with the National Bat Monitoring Programme as a citizen scientist and gain new skills



Build a bat box for your local bats giving them somewhere cosy to sleep



If you find a grounded or injured bat call our National Bat Helpline on 0345 1300 228



Speak up for wildlife and bats in Scotland



Visit our website to learn more
www.bats.org.uk



About us

Bat Conservation Trust



The Bat Conservation Trust is the leading wildlife charity solely devoted to the conservation of bats and the landscapes on which they rely. We work closely with many organisations including over 80 bat groups across the UK.

Bats are unique and play a vital role in our environment but during the last century bat populations suffered severe declines. We are working to secure the future of bats in our ever changing world by tackling the threats to bats, from persecution to loss of roosts and changing land use.

 **BatConservationTrust**

 **_BCT_**

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Our work in Scotland is supported by Scottish Natural Heritage.



SNH Bats in Houses Helpline



01463 725165 www.nature.scot

Bats are very quiet house guests so most people will not know they have a roost. Whilst bats are protected a solution to bat roosts that are causing problems can often be easily found. This helpline can provide advice to householders where bats are leading to problems.

Photos courtesy of Daniel Hargreaves, Hugh Clark, Roger Jones, Dale Sutton, Martin Celuch and John Altringham. Illustration by Lyn Wells.

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