



HAM NEWS Late Summer Bulletin
August - September 2013

The Pine Marten: Herefordshire's lost mustelid



Photo credit: Colin Smith

A talk by Lizzie Croose of the
Vincent Wildlife Trust
Thursday, 19TH September 7.30 pm
Bartestree Village Hall
£2 on the door; FREE to HAM members!

Contact Dave Smith

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HAM NEWS

Message to all HAM members

The 2013 AGM will take place on Friday, 4th October at The Bunch of Carrots, Hampton Bishop. There are two proposals that will need voting on this year. These proposals will be passed if 60% or more of members who are present at the meeting vote in favour of the proposals, so if you want your opinion to count, please attend.

Proposal 1: The name of the group should be changed from 'Herefordshire Action for Mammals' to 'Herefordshire Mammal Group.'

Although our present name reflects one of our primary aims (to do things for the benefit of mammals), we feel that it could imply to potential new members that we are a radical group, perhaps with extreme ideas! The proposed new name is 'softer', suggests no hidden agenda and is consistent with most other county mammal groups throughout the country.

Proposal 2: The price of membership should be raised from £5/year per household to £7.50/year. This is the first rise in subs for many, many years. Whilst raising additional funds for new activities and equipment, we still consider that it gives good value for money and trust that it will not deter any present or potential new members.

There is a bar at the venue, and after the official business there will be three short presentations from HAM members

1. Surveying for dormice in the tree canopies of three Herefordshire woodlands (Dave Smith)
2. Herefordshire Woodlands Bat Project - Comparing the Biodiversity of Bat Species in Managed Plantations compared with Deciduous and Ancient Woodlands (Denise Foster)
3. The habitat preference of the European hedgehog (Emma Franks)

BCT Letter

With regards Philip Brown's Alcatraz Project, Herefordshire are participating in this project and we have 3 woodlands to be surveyed this month, Chase, L & P, and Old Country Wood in Mathon. More details to follow.

New Members:

We welcome 4 new members to HAM:

Nick Underhill-Day
Dwayne Martin
Robyn Guppy
Laura Dell
Andrew Hall
Emma Franks



Barn Owl Pellet Analysis Workshop held on 24th June 2013

An Introduction to Mammal Surveying

Article by Pippa Wollen



Photo showing HAM members Pippa Wollen, Robin Hemmings, Mike Bradley and Dave Smith intently dissecting barn owl pellets at the workshop

I went into the workshop feeling a bit sceptical at how looking through owl 'food' could be useful in helping to survey for mammals, however my opinion has definitely changed!

Firstly, I learnt about Barn Owls anatomy and how they hunt and other little things about them which was good as I didn't know much before. We then started to look at the pellets. We could either do them wet or dry, but I chose dry as it was a lot less messy, however the bones can snap easier if you dissect the pellets dry! I found three complete field vole skulls along with various other pieces of the unfortunate mammals.

This is the most common animal that Barn Owls eat. To find out which animal the owl had eaten, you had to find its skull and analyse teeth, head shape, head size and colour of teeth. The teeth pull out very easily and this is a key identification feature. Using this method, we could see how many animals the owl had eaten and what type. I enjoyed this evening and feel like in a round about way I will have helped owls too, as if we can have a full understanding of what they need, we are better placed to help them survive!

Herefordshire Woodlands Bat Project

Comparing the Biodiversity of Bat Species in Managed Plantations compared with Deciduous and Ancient Woodlands

Article by Denise Foster

The Herefordshire woodlands project started with Chase and Penyard Park Woods near Ross-on-Wye. So far, three bat detector and trapping sessions have taken place. The aim of the project is to determine which bat species are using our county's woodlands both in managed and deciduous woodlands. The project is particularly interested in the *Myotis* species which are difficult to identify using bat detectors alone.

The two surveys performed in May were extremely cold so bat activity was minimal. However six species were detected in each woodland, including Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), Natterer's (*Myotis nattereri*), Whiskered (*Myotis mystacinus*) and Lesser Horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*). Two interesting bats were caught in our nets, a male Barbastelle (*B. barbastellus*) caught in Chase woods (Photo 1) and a Whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) in Penyard Park (Photo 2).



Photo 1:
Male Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*) caught in Chase Wood in May 2013 (Photo courtesy of David Lee).



Photo 2:
Male Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) caught in Penyard Park Wood in June 2013 (Photo courtesy of David Lee)

Mist netting and harp trapping are also benefiting our members; providing experience in handling, bat identification, and recording biometrics.



Photo 3: HAM members Nick Underhill-day, Graham Brown, Louise Scott, Sarah Cadwallader and David Lee at the processing area at Penyard Park Woods in June 2013.

You can find out more about this project at a short presentation to be given at HAM's AGM in October.

Bat Conservation Trust NEWS

Letter Via BCT

Dear Bat Group,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you are looking forwards to monitoring bat activity in your county over 2013. I am an MSc student at the University of Bristol and will be conducting research into *Myotis alcathoe* (Alcathoe bat) during 2013 with equipment from BCT and guidance from Daniel Whitby from AEWC Ltd. I am writing to you to ask for your assistance with my project. Please find below an outline of the project and what you and your bat group could do to help.

Myotis alcathoe was described as a species as recently as 2001 and is resident in Britain. *M. alcathoe* is part of a group of cryptic species that also includes *M. brandtii* (Brandt's bat) and *M. mystacinus* (Whiskered bat). Identification to species is extremely difficult in the field but can be confirmed through DNA analysis of droppings. The recent discovery of *M. alcathoe* in Britain raises questions about the current information regarding the distribution and habitat use of *M. brandtii* and *M. mystacinus*.

To study resource partitioning between the three species, harp traps with acoustic lures will be set up in mixed and broadleaf woodland. I will be surveying woodlands next to and away from water bodies across the South of England and the Midlands.

- Can you help me identify suitable woodland in your county?
- Would you be interested in assisting me on trapping nights?

In addition to the harp trapping I will be collecting dropping samples from across the country. These will undergo DNA testing to identify species. The results will then be used to predict the range of each species. Sample collection kits will be sent out to those who might trap small *Myotis* species as part of their own work.

- Would you like some sample collection kits?
- Do you know of other people who would like some sample collection kits?

Collecting the sample should not be time consuming and fit in with your own research. The sample collection kits will contain everything you need to collect the sample. Once we have the DNA results we can give you a positive species ID for your bat.

If the answer to any of the above is yes and you would like to be involved or if you have any questions please get in touch. I may be able to give a talk outlining my research at any meetings you have coming up.

I hope to hear from you and maybe meet you soon.

Kind Regards,
Philip Brown

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University of Bristol,
philip.brown@bristol.ac.uk
0775 338 7782


Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Group Bulletin No. 96: 4th July 2013

Dear bat group member,

Once again it is a bumper edition of the Bat Group Bulletin:

1. Churches Debate - Thank You

Following the recent bats and churches debate at Westminster Hall, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the bat groups and their members who wrote to MPs, joined in discussions on social media and took part in media interviews. We are very grateful for all of your support. Please do continue to pass information on about your experiences and if you have any questions please email Karen Haysom at Karen.haysom@bats.org.uk



2. Research Update: Mitigation of the impacts of Natterer's bats in churches

Natterer's bats sometimes form large maternity colonies in churches, especially in East Anglia where they can cause severe problems for church users. A DEFRA funded research project to address these issues began in 2011 and is led by the University of Bristol, with BCT and Philip Parker Associates as sub-contractors. Previous updates on this study were sent to bat workers via special editions of the Bat Group Bulletin in spring 2011 and 2012. The latest update on work undertaken by the research team, interim findings and plans for work during summer 2013 is now available on the project website

<http://www.batsandchurches.org.uk/latest-developments/>

3. **2013 Pete Guest Award Nominations Reminder**

The closing date for nominations for the 2013 Pete Guest Award is Friday 19th July. As you know the Pete Guest Award is presented annually to individuals who have made an outstanding practical contribution to bat conservation and is presented in memory of Pete Guest, who was an inspirational figure in bat conservation for more than 20 years. Details of the award and how to nominate someone are on the BCT website at <http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/nationalconferenceawards.html> (all nominations must include a statement of support for the person being nominated). If you have any questions please email lworledge@bats.org.uk

4. Review of BCT Good Practice Guidelines


The 2nd edition of the BCT Good Practice Survey Guidelines have been out for over a year now, so as part of our review process, we are issuing a final call for comments on the 2012 guidelines. We would like to thank all those who have already sent in their comments. We value all the comments we receive, without which we would not be able to build on and improve the document going forward. If you do have any additional comments on the 2012 guidelines, please send them through to the dedicated email account: surveyguidelines@bats.org.uk. To ensure your comments are received and included in the assessment and review process, we would need to receive them by the end of August 2013. We will provide an update on progress at the National Bat Conference held in September 2013.

5. New Press & Communications Officer at BCT

Abi McLoughlin has joined BCT, from the BBC, as our first press and communications officer. She is keen to work with bat groups and is on hand to help and provide tips on engaging with the media for anyone who wants it. If you have an event (roost count, bat walk, bat ringing, bat box making session, church cleaning session etc.) that you might like covering in the local media please give her a buzz in plenty of time for her to set wheels in motion – she has extensive contacts and is on a mission to get more positive bat stories out there. She is also particularly keen at the moment to hear from anyone who has positive experiences of working with churches to share.

6. Head of Biodiversity Vacancy

BCT is seeking to fill a vacancy in the role of Head of Biodiversity as a job share (2.5 days a week). This person will work closely with their colleague in this role to direct and co-ordinate the BCT Biodiversity team and maintain BCT's authority as the UK's leading bat conservation non-government organisation (NGO). This role is a key contact with the wide range of BCT partners including government agencies, non-government organisations, professional bodies and industry and oversees the management of BCT's woodland, built environment, investigations and biodiversity programmes. For a full job description and



application form, please go to www.bats.org.uk/vacancies. Applicants must complete an application form, CVs by themselves will not be accepted. The deadline for applications is 25th July and interviews will take place on the 14th August.

7. Position Statement on HS2

BCT's second position statement on HS2 is now available on our website. An introduction to the two statements is available at <http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/consultations.html> the second statement itself is available at www.bats.org.uk/data/files/HS2_Draft_ES_Position_Statement.pdf

8. First National UK Nathusius' pipistrelle conference

Daniel Hargreaves and Jon Russ are organising the first conference in the UK focussed exclusively on Nathusius' pipistrelles. Taking place on Saturday 24th August, the event will include a full programme of talks and workshops as well as the opportunity to participate in field work during the evening. The day costs £35 and booking is now open. For more information please see the BCT website at www.bats.org.uk/pages/uk_nathusius_conference.html

9. New Woodland Officer at BCT

In June Dan Merrett left his role at BCT as the Woodland Officer to take up a regional post with Plantlife. Dan will be much missed and we are grateful for all his hard work in this role and in previous posts with BCT and wish him well. As of 1st July Helen Miller takes over as Woodland Officer. The Woodland Project is scheduled to finish in January 2014 and Helen will be dividing her time between this new role and her current role as Training Manager until January.

10. Vincent Weir Scientific Award 2013

The Vincent Weir Scientific Award aims to reward and encourage research on the conservation biology of bats by new researchers, and to recognize The Hon. Vincent Weir's major contributions to bat conservation over many years. Applications for the 2013 award are open until 12th July. Please see www.bats.org.uk/pages/the_vincent_weir_scientific_award.html for more information and details on how to apply.

11. International Bat Night 2013

The 17th International Bat Night will take place on 24th & 25th August 2013. If your group is organising an event don't forget you can advertise it on the BCT website at www.bats.org.uk/events.php to get some extra publicity. For more information about the weekend see the BCT website at www.bats.org.uk/pages/batnight.html or EUROBATs at www.eurobats.org/international_bat_night

12. Key Dates for Your Diary

Watch this space for dates and reminders of conferences and other events you may be interested in. Please don't forget you can get some extra publicity for your events by adding the details to the BCT website at www.bats.org.uk/events.php

BCT Events:

13 September – Bat Workers Forum, University of Warwick. For details of last year's meeting please see www.bats.org.uk/pages/annual_bat_workers_forum.html 13 to 15 September – National Bat Conference, University of Warwick. To book a place follow the links at

www.bats.org.uk/pages/national_bat_conference.html 9 November – Scottish Bat workers Conference, Battleby, near Perth. (Save the day – booking not yet open)

Other Events:

11 – 15 August – 16th International Bat Research Conference, San José, Costa Rica. See the conference website for more details www.ibrc2013.com/index.php

18 – 23 August – the 11th INTECOL Congress, Ecology: Into the next 100 years – this year this international conference is being held in London as part of the centenary celebrations of the British Ecological Society. The theme of the Congress is advancing ecology and making it count, and will present world class ecological science that will truly move the science forward. For more details see the website

at www.intecol2013.org/ 24 August – The first UK National Nathusius Conference. This one day conference will include a range of talks and workshops with optional evening field work. The event is being organised by Daniel Hargreaves and Jon Russ. Please see the BCT website for more information:

www.bats.org.uk/pages/uk_national_nathusius_conference.html 24 – 25 August – 17th International Bat Night, for more information see the EUROBATs at www.eurobats.org/international_bat_night

If you have comments on the Bat Group Bulletin or there are any items that you would like included please email me atlworledge@bats.org.uk

Lisa Worledge

Partnerships Officer

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MAMMAL NEWS

SUMMER NEWS FROM PTES

people's trust for **endangered species** |



It's stag beetle season

We have received lots of calls from people keen to report their stag beetle sightings. If you find a stag beetle and aren't sure what to do next please [check our website for more information](#).

Wildlife Encounters

Feeling the heat?

In this sunny weather please spare a thought for your garden visitors. They will be extremely grateful

Looking for something wild to do in the summer holidays? There are still some places left on our *Wildlife Encounters*. From harvest mice to wolves, bats to dormice, there are chances to get close to all kinds of animals. **Visit our website to book and see what is available.**

Mammals on Roads

If you're on the road over the next couple of months please keep an eye out for mammals - dead or alive! We are asking for your help to record British mammals so we can keep an eye on how wild populations are doing. You can request a pack in the post by emailing us, take part **online** or by using our **app for iPhone or Android**.

Cats and dogs

We've just returned from The Pet Show in Warwickshire where we had lots of fun twinning your pets with their wild cousins. Twinning your **cat** or **dog** makes a great gift, with the added benefit of funding important conservation work for big cats and wild dogs worldwide.



if you leave a bowl of water out for them. Thank you Arthur Southwell for this great photo. For more ways to help hedgehogs in your garden please visit **Hedgehog Street**.



Lovely gifts

If you're stuck for ideas for an original wedding present have a look at our **Gifts of Nature**. We've got honeymoon hampers and homes for dormice, as well as some puppy love. Much more original than a crockery set!

EVENTS FOR SUMMER

Friday, 9th August 2013, evening, specific time will be provided to those attending
NBMP Waterways Bat Detector Survey looking for Daubenton Species
Leadon, Ledbury

Contact [Denise Foster](#) on Tel: 07919 120429 or Email: sweetchildofmine@btinternet.com

Sunday 18th August 2013, meet at 10.00
Bat Box check - with Dave Smith at Ast Wood

Contact Dave on Tel: 07905 849842, Email: davetreesmith@aol.co.uk

Monday 19th August 2013

Bat Detector Survey and Mist Netting Session for Chase Woods – with Denise Foster

Contact [Denise Foster](#) on Tel: 07919 120429 or Email: sweetchildofmine@btinternet.com

Thursday 22nd August 2013

Bat Detector Survey and Mist Netting Session for Penyard Park – with Denise Foster

Contact [Denise Foster](#) on Tel: 07919 120429 or Email: sweetchildofmine@btinternet.com

Friday, 23rd August 2013, evening, specific time will be provided to those attending

NBMP Waterways Bat Detector Survey looking for Daubenton Species

Leadon, Ledbury

Contact [Denise Foster](#) on Tel: 07919 120429 or Email: sweetchildofmine@btinternet.com

Thursday 29th August, meet at 19.45.

Bat Walk/Survey – at Little Doward with Martin Hales

Contact Martin Hales on Tel: or Email: wildwaysmartin@btinternet.com

Thursday 19th September 2013

Pine Marten Ecology & Distribution in the UK

A talk by Lizzie Croose of the Vincent Wildlife Trust

To be held every 3rd Saturday of the month from March onwards

Dormouse Box checks – With Dave Smith at Ast Wood.

Contact Dave on Tel: 07905 849842, Email: davetreesmith@aol.co.uk

EVENTS FOR LATER ON IN THE YEAR

Small Mammal Trapping Training Weekend – 27th/28th/29th September to be held in Colwall, held by Johnny Birks and Denise Foster. £5.00 to non-members.

Contact [Denise Foster](#) on Tel: 07919 120429 or Email: sweetchildofmine@btinternet.com

Harvest Mouse Survey – In December tbc for locations and all details.

N.B. Natural England have just approved our Bats in Woodland project plan for both Haugh and Frith Woods so bat catching events will be scheduled in September – look out for dates on the website.

MAMMAL RECORDS – Please send all records to Felicity Burge, contact details below or see the page on our website <http://ham.btck.co.uk/MammalRecords> for details.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

HAM has a new website which is regularly updated with our news, details; it also a library of pictures of our work and events. Please check it regularly at the link below. Meanwhile the previous website has been discarded as it proved to be too fiddly to manage compared to our new one.

If anyone has any photographs of any British mammals and would be happy for us to post them on the website, please send them to Mike Coleman for consideration at the email given at the end of this document. <http://ham.btck.co.uk>

OTHER

If you are interested in being on the committee, we have openings for more members. Also Helen Franks is stepping down as Treasurer/Membership Secretary as of this year, so if anyone is interested in stepping up for this combined position or any other, then please contact Dave Smith on 01432 266937/07905 849842 or davetreesmith@aol.co.uk or Helen Franks on 01531 890265 or humruffin@googlemail.com.

HAM CONTACTS

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Denise Foster

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Deer Survey Co-ordinator - Martin Hales

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