

Chiroptera: Bats

There are 17 species of bat in the UK. Fife has records for 8 species with only 5 having confirmed roosts. Fife's bat records are compiled largely from a survey of bats conducted by the Fife Bat Group and 'Bat Roost Visit Reports' completed by Scottish Natural Heritage. Bats have a very direct interaction with human activity by taking benign advantage of manmade structures as roosts including houses and barns.

For further information on bats see <http://www.bats.org.uk/>.

Sightings of Bats should be reported to Fife Nature Records Centre (nature.info@fife.gov.uk) and Fife & Kinross Bat Group (fifekinrossbats@gmail.com).

Update/Revision History: Revised by Claire Lacey, May 2017.

Vespertilionidae

Pipistrelle species: Most roosts in Fife have not been determined as common or soprano pipistrelle and so are recorded as only 'pipistrelle species'. There are over 260 such roosts recorded since 1983 when the Fife Bat Group was set up. Records prior to 1996 are not separated into *P pipistrellus* and *P pygmaeus* and are included here. Roosts are known from a wide variety of buildings and structures across all of Fife. Many roosts have only been visited once have not been revisited to separate common and soprano roosts. The largest known maternity roost is in east Fife and has been counted in June at [approx. 1500 bats]. Typically roosts house much fewer bats. Pipistrelles (*P pipistrellus* and *P pygmaeus*) are only occasionally recorded in winter, usually a single bat found during repairs on roofs or windows.

Soprano pipistrelle; *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*: Widespread and common. Only recognised as distinct from the common pipistrelle in the 1990s by analysis of echolocation calls and DNA. This appears to be the commoner of the two, with multiple confirmed roosts in buildings, and many more flight records, using ultrasound detectors and sound analysis, from all across Fife. Two tree roosts have been located, though one was in a dead elm at Keil's Den, which has since fallen. Found regularly in bat boxes checked by the bat group at different locations in Fife, including Tentsmuir forest, Heatherhall woods and Weddersbie Myre.

Common pipistrelle; *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*: Only two confirmed roosts identified, but flight records are as widespread and often almost as common as those of the soprano pipistrelle. Found regularly in bat boxes checked by the group at different locations in Fife, including Tentsmuir forest, Heatherhall woods and Weddersbie Myre.

Nathusius' pipistrelle; *Pipistrellus nathusii*: Rare. One observed at Glenrothes by bat detector, though call not recorded. Recorded bat boxes and from harp trapping activities at Burleigh Sands.

Brown long-eared bat; *Plecotus auritus*: Records of roosts show this to be widespread, though scarce. One unusually large summer roost with 75 bats has been found in west Fife. Generally under-recorded due to its habits. Single bats have been found in late autumn clinging to buildings in exposed sites such as Leven High Street and Falkland Palace, suggesting nearby roosts. Only one confirmed wintering site is known.

Daubenton's bat; *Myotis daubentonii*: Widespread but uncommon. Recent survey work undertaken for Fife Bat Group reveals most watercourses and waterbodies are used for summer foraging, but still only one significant breeding roost is known. Two smaller roosts are known in bridges.

Natterer's bat; *Myotis nattereri*: Widespread and scarce. Three maternity roosts are known. Recent research using ringing and radio-tracking has investigated the inter-relation between apparent sub-populations at one site. Roosts are known across Fife, but there are very few records. Three confirmed wintering sites are known, and ringing of swarming bats has revealed movement to one disused mine site from at least 25 kilometres away. This appears to be the scarcest breeding bat in Fife. Found regularly in bat boxes checked by the bat group at different locations in Fife, including Tentsmuir forest and Weddersbie Myre.

Whiskered bat; *Myotis mystacinus*: Rare. One record not confirmed of a grounded individual on a shop wall in Leven High Street in 1986, and one unconfirmed *Myotis* sp. in a hibernation site thought to be a Brandt's/whiskered.

Noctule; *Nyctalus noctula*: Rare. Isolated records from two sites, but no regular sites known, may only be occasional dispersing bats.

Rhinolophidae

No Horseshoe bats are known to have been recorded in Fife.