

BATS & "The Millennium Link"

NEWSLETTER



EDITOR :-
NEIL MIDDLETON
25 KILLIN DRIVE, POLMONT, FK2 0QQ
Tel - 01324 710007 Email - middleneil@msn.com

Issue 5 - April 2003

It's Bat Time Of Year Again

.....So Winter is finally over, our Annual Report for 2002 concluded and it is time to start surveying again. It is hard to believe that we are about to embark on Year 3 of this project. The support and encouragement we get from all areas is well beyond what we would have dared to hope for. If you have helped or contributed in any way then a **big thank you**. If you haven't been involved and would like to, please get in touch.

More Funds From BW

We are pleased to announce that British Waterways have made a further contribution to our funds. This along with the extra money received from Falkirk Environment Trust last summer, and the initial contribution provided by Scottish Natural Heritage, now ensures that we have all the required funding to see the project through to conclusion in 2005. As always we thank all of our funders for their continued support.

Survey Sites 2003

We have been putting together our survey programme for 2003 and at time of writing we intend to do 24 surveys this year, scheduled as follows. If you want to help with any of these then please get in touch with the editor for details.

April 2003 – Gogar Moor (UN), Avontoun (UN), Wilkies Basin (UN)

May 2003 – Causewayend (UN), A801 (UN), Netherton (FC), Kirkintilloch West (FC)

June 2003 – Harrison Park (UN), Auchinstarry Basin (FC), Learielaw (UN),
Kelvinhead (FC), Gogar Moor (UN)

July 2003 – Wilkies Basin (UN), Tintock (FC), Slateford (UN)

Aug 2003 – Purliehill (UN), Learielaw (UN), Jellyhill (FC), Carmuir (FC), Gogar Moor (UN)

Sept 2003 – Underwood East (FC), Wilkies Basin (UN), Harrison Park (UN), Learielaw (UN)

(UN) - Union Canal, (FC) - Forth & Clyde Canal

BaTML – Public Events 2003

This year we will be holding 2 events on the canals to which the public are invited to come along and find out all about bats and the work we have been doing so far.

Please feel free to spread the word and tell anyone who may be interested about these evenings :-

Ratho, Union Canal

Thursday 17.7.2003

8.00pm until late. Cost £1 per head.

Booking essential through Neil Middleton.

Telephone 01324 710007.

Bishopbriggs, Forth & Clyde Canal

Friday 22.8.2003.

8.00pm until late. Cost £1 per head.

Booking essential through Mugdock Country Park.

Telephone 0141 956 6100.

In Brief.....

- **Annual Report 2002**
now available and being distributed to our funders. If you would like your own copy please get in touch. Cost (inc. P/P) - £5.00
- **61 Surveys completed during 2001/2002.**
- **24 New Surveys scheduled for Spring/Summer 2003.**
- **Winter Presentations**
given to Clyde Bat Group, SWT (Clyde Branch) and Bat Conservation Trust's Scottish Bat Day.
- **Duke Of Edinburgh's Silver Award students involved for the first time this year.**
- **Newsletter Distribution**
Our newsletter is issued to more than 95 people and organisations who are involved with or expressed an interest in this project.
- **Newsletter No 6 – due out in October 2003.**
- **Get Involved....** *It's easy, just phone the editor. No experience necessary.*



BATS & "The Millennium Link" is supported by the following organisations :-

SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

British Waterways

FALKIRK ENVIRONMENT TRUST

Clyde Bat Group

Central Scotland Bat Group

Daubenton's Survey Results – 2001/2002 Summary

Generally the occurrence of Daubenton's bat on our canals has been greater than initially anticipated. It must be borne in mind that prior to BaTML very few surveys of the canals had taken place and these mainly drew blanks. However we are pleased to say that during our survey months we have always (except during extreme weather) encountered Daubenton's bat and they have been present at every one of our survey sites.

In addition to listening to these bats as they fly by our monitors, we quite often get good views as they skim by, just above the water surface, very close to where we are positioned.

On a typical survey evening we would expect to find an average of 5 bats, some of which would remain in the area foraging for periods of up to 30 minutes. Our most active site for foraging provides a constant feeding frenzy over one of the canal basins, whilst the site with the highest number of individual bats has produced a minimum number of 35. So far we estimate that there are at least 7 roosts, 3 of which we have been able to narrow down to specific areas.

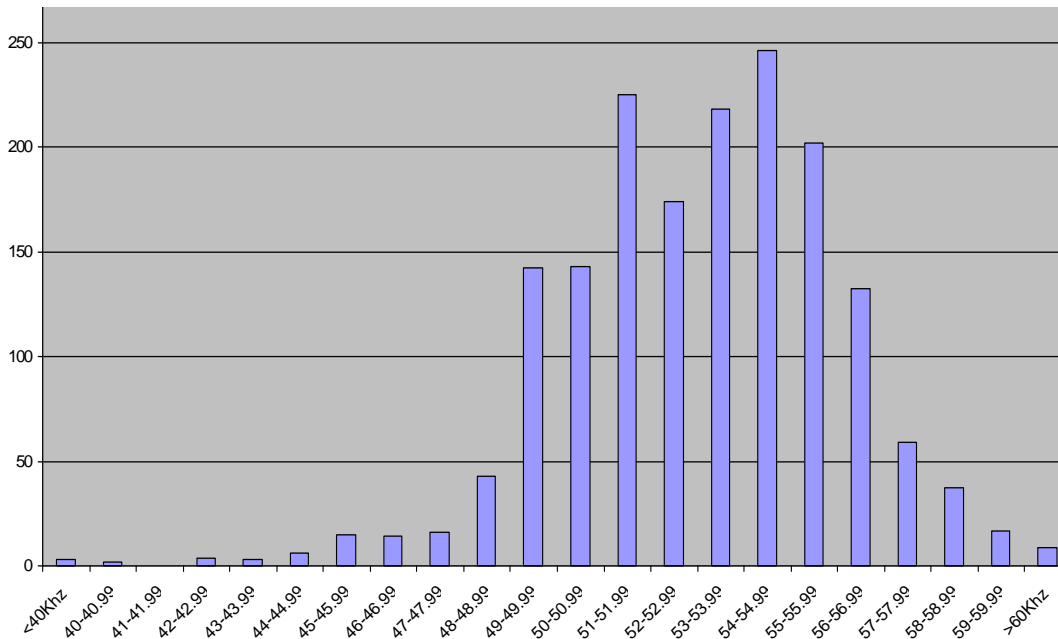
Our comparison in activity between 2001 and 2002 shows in most circumstances an upward trend. For example in 2001 on average we encountered a minimum of 4 bats per survey evening and this increased to 5 in 2002. In addition most months showed an increase in bat passes for 2002 compared against 2001, however evidence of feeding appears to have reduced slightly. As such after only 2 years it would be unwise for us to make any conclusions at this stage. In future years we will continue with this monitoring and also carry out further searches for new roost sites. Any roosts found are also monitored as well as brought to the attention of British Waterways and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Overall our survey methodology is consistently providing us with all of the information we would have hoped for and is proving to be a valuable tool for monitoring bats active in narrow habitat corridors such as canals.

Pipistrelle Survey Results – 2001/2002 Summary

So far the activity of pipistrelle bats along the canals has been fairly consistent in that we almost always encounter Soprano pipistrelle (55Khz). However the occurrence of Bandit pipistrelle (45Khz) is considerably less, with only 4% of bats definitely this species. Our results also show us that almost a third of all bats recorded fall into a grey area (between 48Khz and 52Khz) where they cannot be definitely allocated to one of the two species present (see graph below). As such these bats have to be recorded as unidentified. In reality however, most of them are probably Soprano pipistrelle. We are in the process of trying to develop a methodology which may help in separating some of the bats falling into this area.

We have recorded 2180 pipistrelle bats to date. In a comparison between 2001 and 2002 overall pipistrelle activity has increased from an annual average per survey night in 2001 of 38, to 54 in 2002. However within this Bandit pipistrelle activity has reduced (this is mainly



down to the results at one site). Also of interest is that in both 2001 and 2002 we did not encounter any Bandit pipistrelle bats until well into the Summer. Studies elsewhere in the UK suggest that these bats do not rely on this type of habitat to the same extent as the Soprano. So far our records appear to support these thoughts, however we need to rule out geographical distribution etc. before saying that our local Bandits are definitely showing a habitat preference.

Graph Left: Total number of pipistrelles allocated against their dominant frequency of maximum energy.



Volunteer Surveyors

So far over 40 volunteer surveyors have been involved in helping us with our field work. Without these people we would struggle to deliver the amount of surveys required to reach any meaningful results. In addition we are able to improve the image of bats by showing them in a positive light.

BaTML Surveyors in action :-
Left to right – Frank Flemming, Sarah Watts, Laura Black and Chris Gould.



DATA PROTECTION ACT

Please note, if you are the direct recipient of this newsletter, then your name, address and other contact details are being retained on our database for use solely in connection with BaTML.

If you do not wish to be kept informed about our activities, please advise us accordingly and we will arrange for your details to be removed.