

New Forest Biodiversity Forum

Bats at RSPB Franchise's Lodge

Chris Dieck(RSPB)

- 15 of our 18 bat species have been found to be using trees and the other three forage in and around woodland.
- Franchise's Lodge consists of almost 400 hectares of woodland, so should be very important to bats.
- Prior to RSPB acquisition almost no bat work had been carried out. Since then, catching surveys by Hampshire & Wiltshire Bat Group & RSPB staff have found:
- 10 species of bat using the site: Common & Soprano Pipistrelle; Natterer's Bat, Daubenton's Bat, Bechstein's Bat, Barbastelle, Noctule, Serotine, Brown Long-eared Bat, Greater Horseshoe Bat.
- Of these, the pipistrelle species, Natterer's Bat, Brown Long-eared Bat, Noctule, Bechstein's Bats and Barbastelle are thought to be breeding on the site or near the site.
- Possible presence of Whiskered Bat, Brandt's Bat and perhaps Nathusius' Pipistrelle, Grey Long-eared Bat and Leisler's Bat, but evidence is not strong for the latter three.
- One Bechstein's Bat had been ringed by Ian Davidson-Watts in 2015 at Chilmark Quarry, ca. 30km away. The published traveling distance for the species in the UK is 10-20km.
- Static detector analysis is under way to determine importance of coniferous plantation for bats and the effect of thinning on bat activity.
- Radio tracking of Bechstein's Bats is planned for 2024 to determine the size of the colony, roost locations, foraging areas and commuting routes.