



# Barbastelle bat

*Barbastella barbastellus*



**Snapshot:** one of Britain's rarest bats; found in buildings, hollow trees or behind bark in deciduous woodland; may be seen foraging in winter.



Barbastelle bat. Note the distinctive pug-shaped nose and broad triangular ears meeting in the middle of the forehead © Arthur Rivett



An old tree with peeling bark provides suitable habitat for Barbastelle bats © Arthur Rivett

## How to identify a Barbastelle bat

**Echolocation:** peak at 32 kHz. Short, hard smacks, in fast and then slower pulses.

- **Size:** Medium, head & body length 40mm - 55 mm
- **Flight pattern:** Fast, agile
- **Distinctive features**  
Pug-shaped nose  
Broad triangular shaped ears that face forward and meet in the middle of the forehead.
- **Colour:** Dark fur with lighter tips on back.

## Habitat and requirements

- Deciduous woodland, wet meadows with water bodies, woodland streams and rivers.
- Barbastelles hunt for food all winter if the weather is mild.
- **Roost sites:** cavities in timber-framed buildings, between roof timbers, hollow tree trunks and behind lifting bark.
- **Hibernation:** can tolerate cold weather, only entering hibernacula when temperatures drop well below freezing for long periods. Often hibernate in exposed places.
- **Hibernation sites:** caves, tunnels, cellars, cracks in trees or under loose bark on dead trees.

## Conservation

### Protected under UK and European law

- ◇ Considered Vulnerable England
- ◇ **Relevant legislation:**  
Bonn Convention  
Bern Convention  
Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)  
s41 Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 list of Priority species

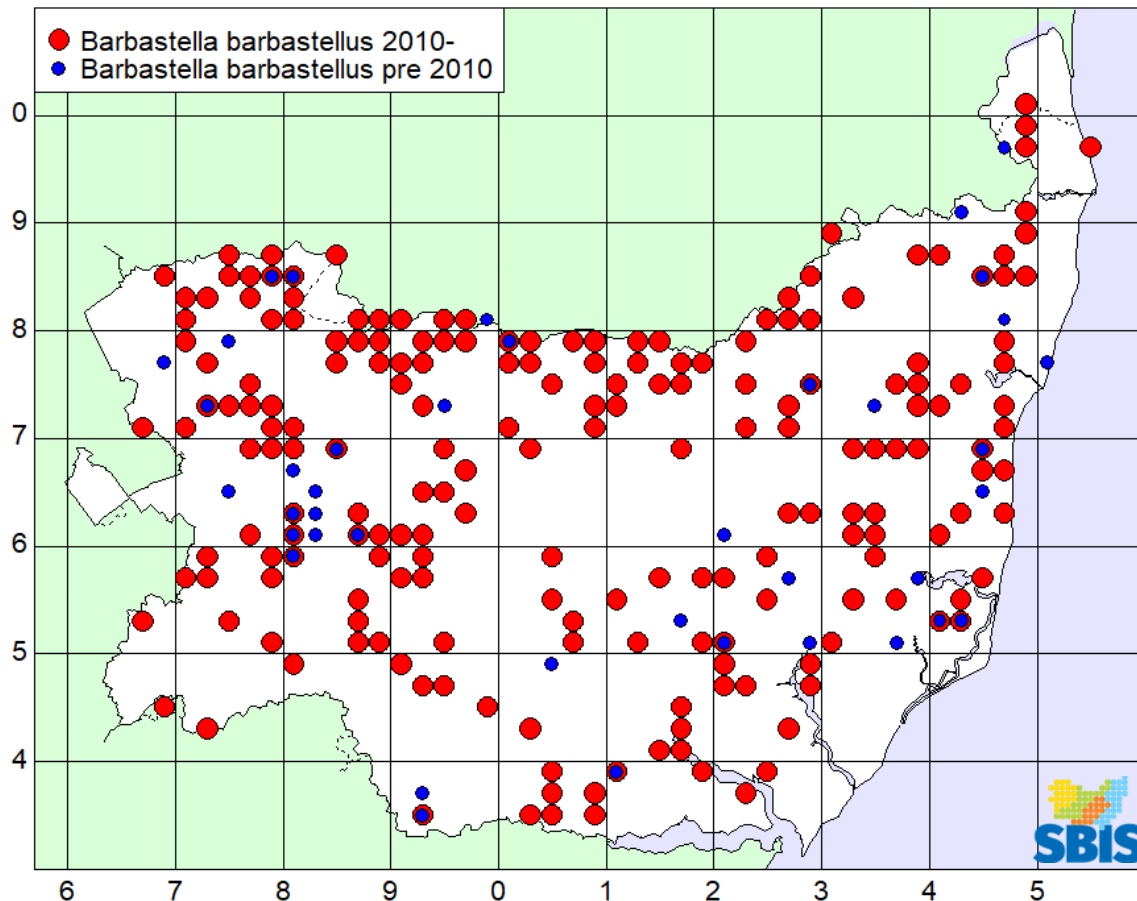
## Barbastelle bats in Suffolk

As at 2016, 138 locations had been confirmed for Barbastelle bats. The species is widespread across the county in suitable habitat, but in small numbers. It is one of Britain's rarest bats.

The majority of the records in the west of the county pre-2004 were for hibernating animals. However, the advances in bat detectors, particularly when used in conjunction with computer sound analysis, has enabled Suffolk Bat Group to survey a large

number of potential new sites. Ancient woodland and parkland have been the initial target habitat and Barbastelles have been found on every occasion. Breeding colonies have been located through radio tracking, but as a tree dwelling species that favours old trees with lifting bark, this habitat, and therefore the location of colonies, changes every year.

The distribution map (SBIS, dated May 2020) shows current records from 2010 to date (red) and the pre 2010 records (blue). The increase in records from 2010 across the county can be clearly seen.



## Further information

- **Bat Conservation Trust: Fact sheet, photos and listen to Barbastelle echolocation**  
<https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/what-are-bats/uk-bats>
- **The Wildlife Trusts Fact Sheet**  
<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/mammals/barbastelle-bat>
- **Distribution Atlas for Bats in Suffolk 1983-2016**, published by Suffolk Bat Group, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service and Suffolk Wildlife Trust 2017. Available to download at <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/suffolkbatgroup> or <https://www.suffolkbis.org.uk/bats>
- **Suffolk Bat Group** <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/suffolkbatgroup>
- **National Bat Helpline:** 0345 1300 228

