



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Common Pipistrelle

Pipistrellus pipistrellus

Snapshot: a single pipistrelle can consume up to 3,000 insects in one night; males attract females with 'songflights' and singing social calls; commonest British bat.



Holding three Common Pipistrelle bats in the hand

© Luci Spencer



Farm ponds provide good feeding habitat with lots of small insect prey such as midges © Arthur Rivett

Threats

- Habitat loss through intensive agricultural practices
- Impacts from building renovations, exclusion, toxic remedial timber treatment chemicals
- Cat attacks
- Increased lighting affecting roosts
- Injury from wind farms and turbines

How to identify a Common Pipistrelle

Echolocation: peak at 45 kHz. Calls sound like series of clicks towards higher ranges, turning into 'wetter' slaps with deepest slap at about 45kHz.

- **Size:** Small, head & body length 35 mm - 45 mm
- **Flight pattern:** fast, jerky flight catching and eating small insects on the wing.
- **Distinctive features**
Small size
Emergence from roost about 20 minutes after sunset, flying 2-10m above the ground searching for insects with 'aerial hawking'.
- **Colour:** Medium to dark brown. Face and around the eyes usually dark.

Habitat and requirements

- Feed in wide range of habitats including woodland, hedgerows, grassland, farmland, urban areas.
- **Roost sites:** summer maternity roosts (up to 75 females) in crevices of buildings i.e. behind hanging tiles, soffit and barge or eaves boarding, between roofing felt and roof tiles or in cavity walls. Also in tree holes and crevices and in bat boxes. Males roost alone or in small numbers.
- **Hibernation:** usually in small numbers in crevices in buildings, trees and in bat boxes. Often in relatively exposed locations, rarely underground.

Conservation

Considered Least Concern England

Protected under UK and European law

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

Common Pipistrelles in Suffolk

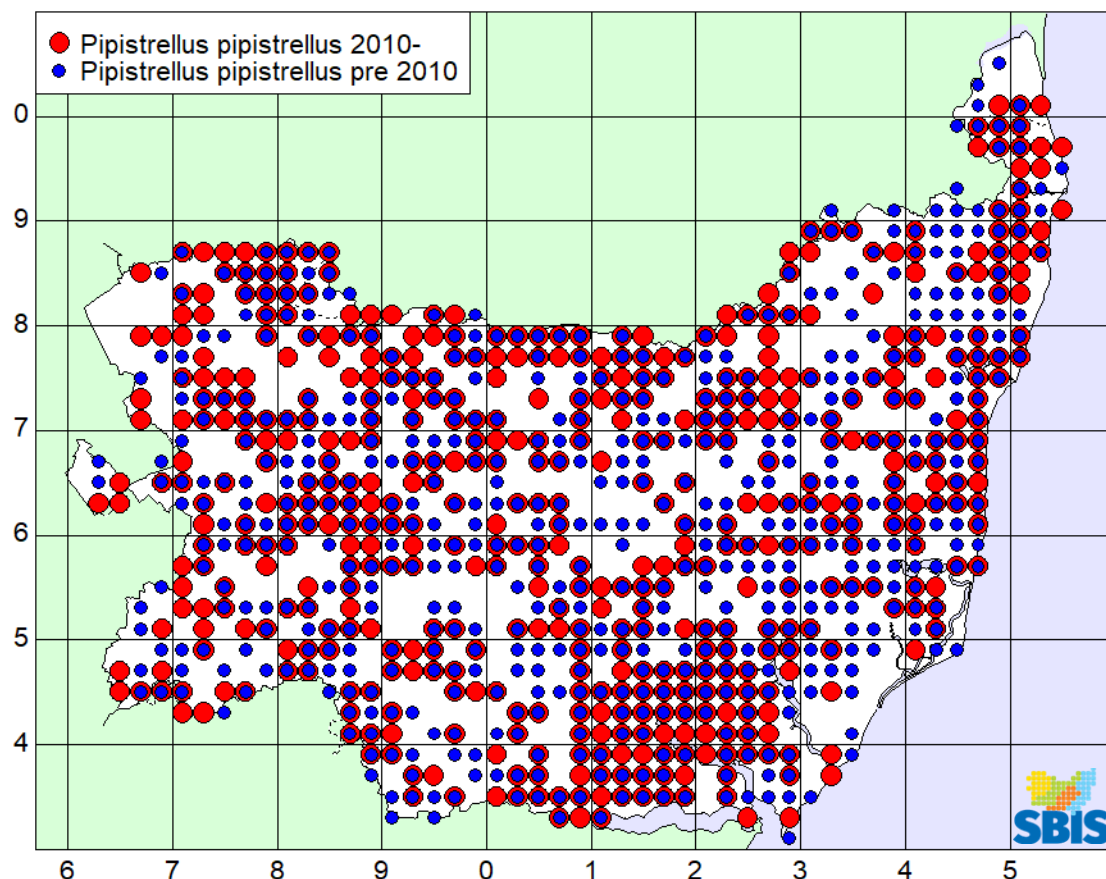
The Common and Soprano Pipistrelle were only identified as separate species in the 1990s. The two species look very similar, but can be identified by the frequency of their echolocation calls (Common Pipistrelle peak calls are at 45 kHz and Soprano Pipistrelle peak calls at 55 kHz).

Both of the commoner species of pipistrelle bats are usually associated with buildings, particularly in the summer. Most roosts are found whilst following up Natural England enquiries where the animals are likely to be disturbed by building works or timber treatment. Over 350 roosts have been located in the

county, the size of the colonies ranging from 50 - 400+ animals. These roosting sites include listed and historic buildings, modern houses, barns, churches, trees and bat boxes. Roosting sites in trees are notoriously difficult to locate and consequently are likely to be under-recorded, not just for pipistrelles, but for all other species.

There are very few records of pipistrelles in hibernation, usually they are discovered during building works and generally only single animals.

They are the only bat species to have been recorded in every 10km square in the county.



Further information

- **Bat Conservation Trust: Fact sheet, photos and listen to Common Pipistrelle 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/common-pipistrelle>

- **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

