



Bats in Suffolk Fact Sheet

Brown Long-eared

Plecotus auritus



Snapshot: able to take insects from lighted windows; highly sensitive hearing enables them to locate prey from insect movements; ears nearly as long as body, when at rest ears curled back or tucked under wings.



Brown long-eared bat © Tony Spencer

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

How to identify a Brown Long-eared bat

- **Echolocation:** peaks at 35 kHz. Calls quiet, heard as series of clicks on a bat detector.
- **Size:** Medium, head & body length 37 - 52 mm
- **Flight pattern:** slow hovering flight with steep dives and glides, highly manoeuvrable.
- **Feeding:** often flies slowly amongst foliage, picking insects off leaves and bark. May land on the ground to catch insects.
- **Distinctive features**
Broad wings and tail
Perches inside porches or barns to feed on insects
can be recognised by accumulations of insect remains, especially wings.
- **Colour:** adults with light brown fur, pale underneath; juveniles greyish.

Habitat and requirements

- Open deciduous and coniferous woodland, parkland, orchards.
- **Roost sites:** summer roosts in older buildings, barns, churches and trees; small colonies of about 20 animals. Males sometimes found in maternity roosts.
- **Hibernation sites:** caves, tunnels, mines, icehouses, sometimes trees and buildings. Hibernate at very cold temperatures, often just above freezing

Threats

- Vulnerable to attack by predators when flying close to the ground or landing.
- Modern intensive agricultural practices
- Conversion of barns resulting in loss of suitable feeding and roosting habitats.
- Particularly susceptible to pesticides, especially on exposed timbers in roofs.

Brown Long-eared bats in Suffolk

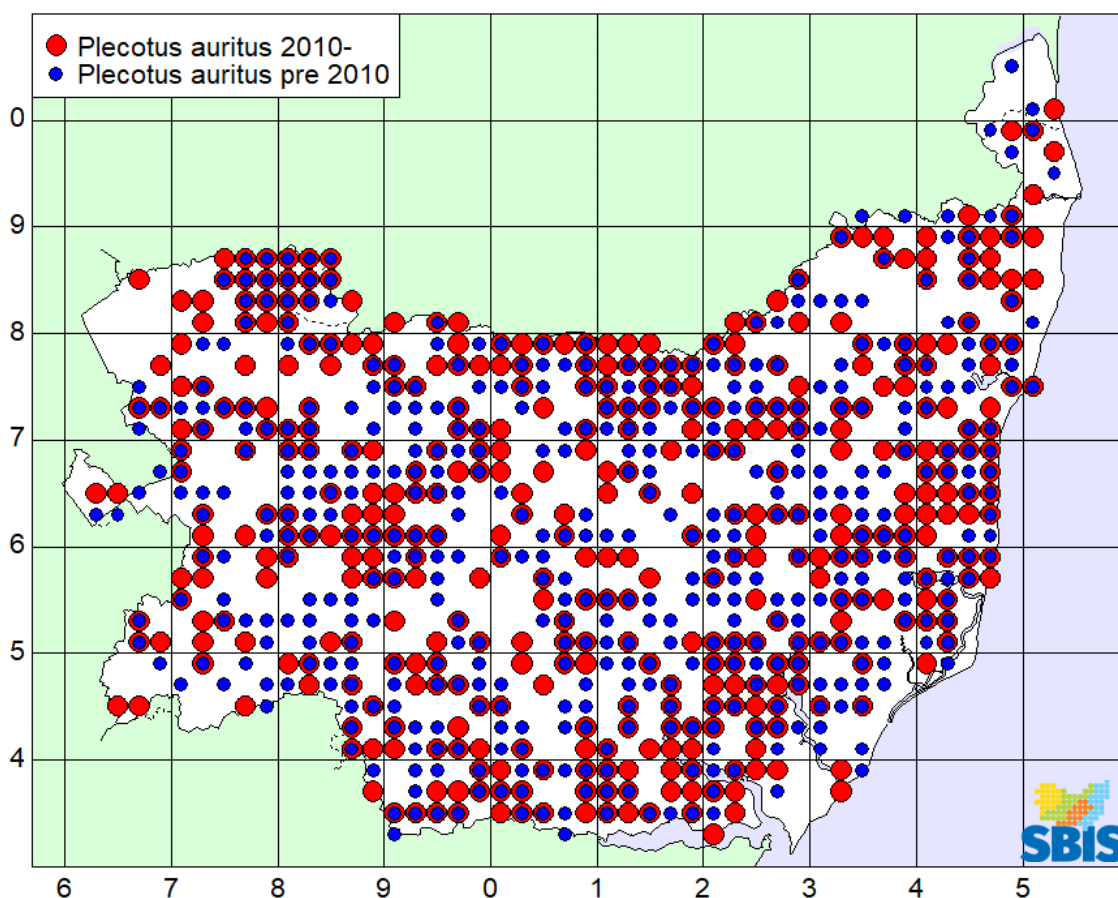
The Brown Long-eared bat is a common and widespread species second only to the pipistrelle in distribution, both nationally and in Suffolk.

This species is found in a wide variety of sites from modern houses, churches to timber framed barns and including ice houses and chalk tunnels. It is the only species regularly found both in summer and winter. They readily use bat boxes and some 65 animals were discovered in one Thetford box a few years ago! Nursery colonies are usually located within lofts where the bats cluster along the ridge board, giving rise to a characteristic line of

droppings on the loft floor. This species is now regularly found in lofts during the winter and sometimes may not be hibernating.

They have a characteristic slow, fluttering flight with occasional hovering pauses and are more frequently seen than heard because of their very quiet echolocation sounds which are often not picked up by bat detectors.

A total of 88 new locations have been recorded since the last atlas and the species remains widespread across the county.



Further information

- **Bat Conservation Trust: Fact sheet, photos and listen to Brown Long-eared bat 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/brown-long-eared-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