

Leisler's bat

Nyctalus leisleri



Snapshot: rare in UK; old name was 'hairy-armed bat'; emerge early around sunset; lion's mane appearance; males have harem of up to nine females and give off strong sweet odour during autumn.



Leisler's bat © Arthur Rivett



Good habitat for Leisler's bat. Grazed parkland and water provide a range of insect prey such as caddis flies and beetles

© Sue Hooton

How to identify a Leisler's bat

- **Echolocation:** peaks at 25 kHz. Characteristic "chip chop" with clicks at top of the range.
- **Size:** Medium, head & body length 50mm - 70mm
- **Flight pattern:** high and fast in the open at tree top level with shallow dives; may fly close to ground along well lit roads, sometimes attracted to insects around street lights.
- **Distinctive features**
Vocal, especially prior to emergence at about sunset, producing loud metallic call.
- **Colour:** fur reddish-brown; long fur around shoulders and upper back give lion's mane appearance.

Habitat and requirements

- Deciduous woodland, forest species.
- **Roost sites:** tree holes, will use bat boxes, buildings, particularly gable ends, between tiles and underfelt, under ridge tiles, above soffit boards, behind hanging tiles, under loft floor insulation, behind window shutters, in disused chimneys.
- **Hibernation:** tree holes, cracks and cavities of buildings, caves, tunnels.

Conservation

Considered Near Threatened 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

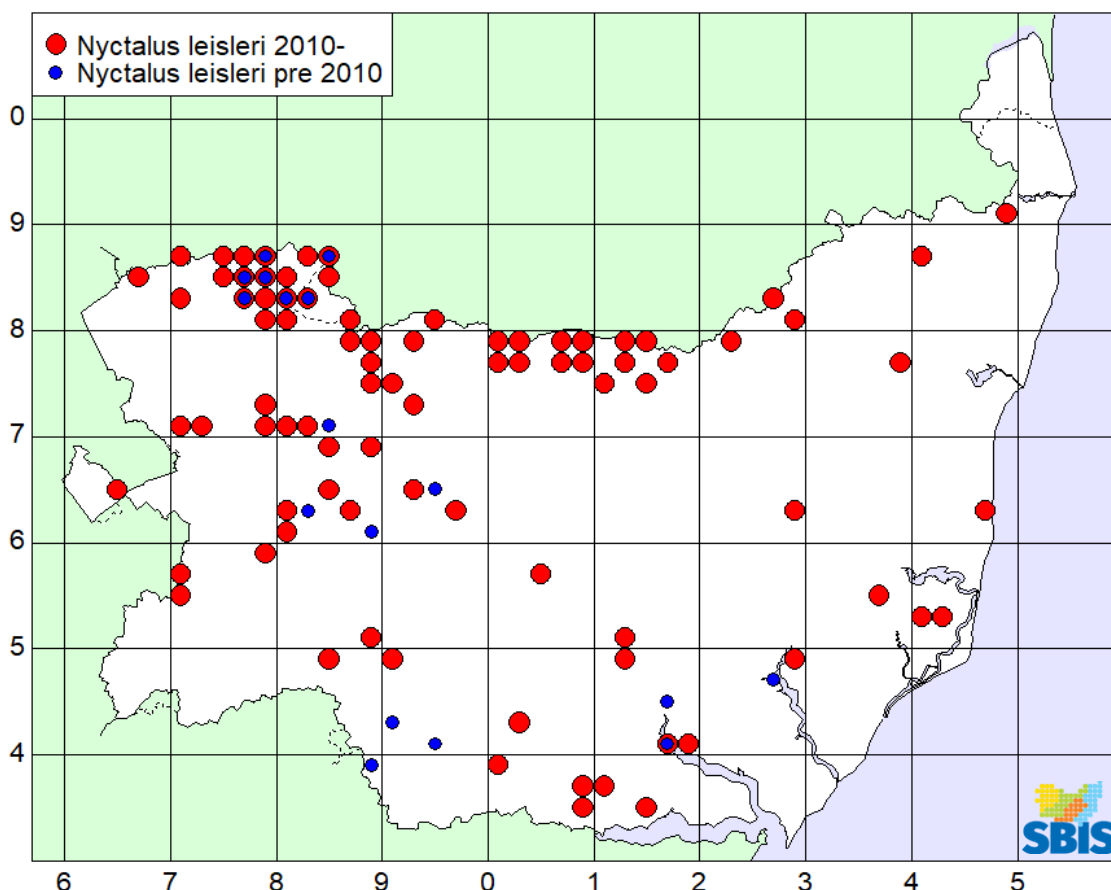
Leisler's bats in Suffolk

The Leisler's bat is common in Ireland, but is regarded as a rare species in Great Britain although records suggest it has a widespread distribution. The picture in Suffolk reflects the situation in the rest of the country, with only ten records outside Thetford Forest and only two of these relating to nursery colonies.

Prior to the start of the Thetford Forest Bat Box project in 1975, this species was unknown in the county. Over the years, Leisler's have been regular occupants of the boxes and in 1998 a breeding

colony was discovered in a house in Brandon. It is possibly animals from this colony that occur in the Thetford bat boxes, but since 2012 records show that this animal is widespread in the north west of the county. The scattered records across the rest of the county require further follow up work to confirm the species status in the county.

No animals have been discovered in hibernation, but it is predominately a tree dwelling species and such sites are most likely to be used in winter, making them difficult to locate. Leisler's are known to fly quite long distances and so breeding and hibernation sites could be many miles apart.



Further information

- **Bat Conservation Trust: Fact sheet, photos and listen to Leisler's 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

