



## Noctule bat

*Nyctalus noctula*

**Snapshot:** one of Britain's largest species and usually first bat to appear in the evening, sometimes in daylight; may fly over 10km from roost to feeding areas.



Noctule bats being checked as part of long term monitoring of bat boxes in Thetford Forest © Luci Spencer



Noctule bat roost in woodpecker holes in Scots Pine tree © Arthur Rivett

### Threats

- Modern intensive agricultural practices reducing suitable feeding habitat such as permanent pasture and woodland edge/hedgerows.
- Intensive management and loss of suitable trees for roosting.

### How to identify a Noctule bat

**Echolocation:** peaks at 25 kHz. A characteristic 'chip chop' with occasional clicks during feeding.

- **Size:** large, head & body length 37mm - 48 mm
- **Flight pattern:** Powerful, direct flight, up to 50 kph, often well above tree-tops, steep dives to chase insects.
- **Distinctive features**  
Narrow pointed wings  
Broad ears
- **Colour:** Adults sleek with chocolate brown fur, juveniles and some females dull chocolate brown.

### Habitat and requirements

- Primarily live in rot / woodpecker holes in trees, rarely in buildings. Loud metallic chirping sounds can be heard up to 200-300m away.
- Wetlands, pastures and widely-spaced woodlands.
- **Roost sites:** rare gatherings in buildings move off early June. Single males establish mating roosts in tree holes late summer. Maternity colonies frequently change roosts, mothers carrying babies; young left in crèches.
- **Hibernation sites:** mainly in trees or rock fissures, but also in bat boxes, buildings and other man-made structures. Can survive temperatures to  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$

### 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)

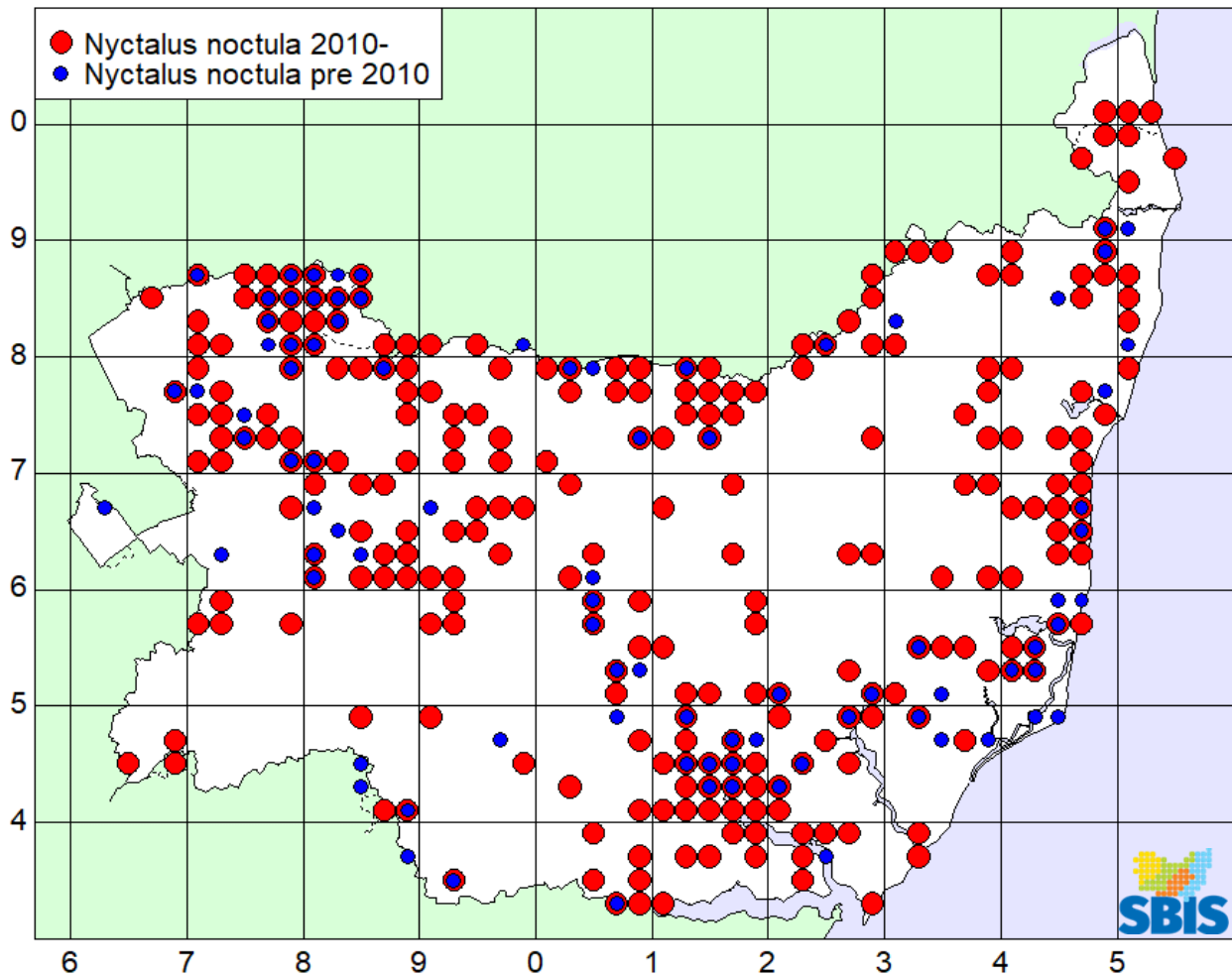
s41 Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 list of Priority species

## Noctule bats in Suffolk

Records suggest that the Noctule is widespread throughout the county, but most records relate to either bat detector and sight records or animals discovered in bat boxes. The species has been known to breed in bat boxes in at least one of the county's project areas.

One of the largest known regular colonies of Noctule bats occurred in a white poplar on Purdis

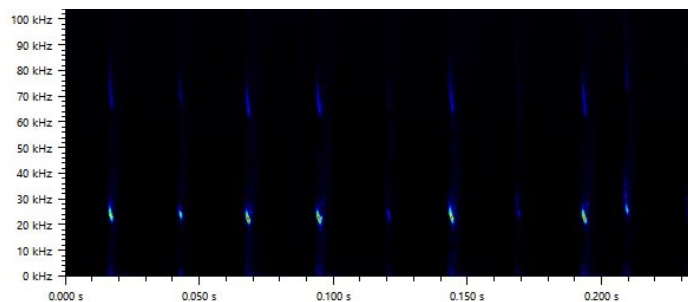
Heath golf course near Ipswich. Over 50 animals were seen emerging in August 2000 and no larger colonies have been discovered since that time. Almost all of the recent records are of individuals recorded on detectors but there are still six 10km squares that have never recorded this species and further six that have no recent records.



### Further information

- **Bat Conservation Trust: Fact sheet, photos and listen to Noctule 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/noctule>
- **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



Noctule bat echolocation call (sonogram)