



The Norwich Natterer

for Norwich and the surrounding area

Update from the Chair

With the bat season in full swing, many of us will now be in semi-nocturnal mode searching for bats or undertaking surveys. The weather has been mostly kind and it will be interesting to see what people have been finding when the records start coming in. Records of bats are really valuable helping our understanding of the distribution and abundance of these creatures and identifying conservation priorities. In this newsletter you will find details of how you can submit your records to the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) who collate and manage all biodiversity records from the county. So if you are sitting there with a notebook full of records from previous years, or even just a few, why not spend a little time making them available for wider good?

Whilst I am talking about records, it is great news to hear that the Norfolk Bat Survey run by the BTO will be continuing again this year. The survey has already generated and analysed more than half a million bat recordings. The original detectors from this ground-breaking citizen science project were showing their age and in need of considerable maintenance just to keep them available. Happily the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership has contributed to buying some new detectors and so we can expect many more records again this year. Check out the Norfolk Bat Survey website for details of how you can take part.

The value of these records should not be underestimated. Excitingly, Norfolk has been selected to be a pilot area for a Local Bat Conservation Plan. Led by Natural England, this plan is aiming to make a real difference to bat conservation in the county. One of the main reasons why Norfolk was chosen as a pilot was because in the county we have some of the very best data on bat distribution and abundance anywhere in the country. This data should start to allow the identification of the critical features of bat fauna for which Norfolk is especially or uniquely important, and help direct resources to where they can make the most difference. But that doesn't mean we have enough data! Part of the plan will be to identify where there are gaps in our knowledge, and find ways of filling them.

So keeping batting – and remember to submit those records!

Support Us

If you would like to become a member of the Norwich Bat Group we do not ask for a membership fee. However, we rely on donations and if you would like to support the work of the Norfolk bat Group, this can be done via the [Norwich Bat Group Website](#). Thank you for your support!

The central part of the Norwich Bat Group's efforts are to help protect, conserve and raise awareness of bats in Norwich and the surrounding area.



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Bat Conservation Trust





Norwich Bat Group News



Winging It! Event at Gressenhall

Norwich Bat Group were delighted to be invited to run a stall at Gressenhall's "Winging It" event on May 6th. The day was devoted to winged creatures, and despite clashing with a football event in Norwich, around 400 visitors "flocked" to see bird sculptures, live owls, and of course, some lovely bats! The children had a great time Scoffing The Moth and



making some fantastic face masks, although the Norwich Bat Group helpers were quite glad when they could stop making the Pom Pom bats (a number are still having nightmares of winding wool round and round and round and round....). Keep your eyes peeled for the next event we're running with Gressenhall when we'll be taking a walk around the site looking to see what bats are about.



Bat boxes

Norwich Bat Group members have been busy putting up bat boxes on trees at Whitlingham Country Park. The bat boxes were funded by the Broads Authority and they will be monitored twice annually. The Nathusius' pipistrelle project has had some successful trapping sessions around the lake and we are hoping to get some Nathusius' pipistrelle recaptures in them!



Jane Harris, Anthony Gagen and Andrea Kelly installing a bat box on a tree at Whitlingham Country Park.

Bat Workers' Christmas Catch Up and Social

Following the success of the Bat Workers' Christmas Catch Up and Social In November we are looking to make this an annual event to give Norwich bat workers the opportunity to socialise and hear a little of the work undertaken by bat groups working in Norfolk.

Talks

In April Rebecca Hazelwood kindly gave us a talk on her experiences working for African Bat Conservation in Malawi.

In March Sam Neal from Norfolk Biodiversity Information Services (NBIS) gave a talk to the bat group on the importance of records and also highlighting how little exists in records regarding bats. For more information on submitting records to NBIS please see the guidance provided by NBIS on page 4 of this newsletter.



Featured Article

White-Nose Syndrome – the silent killer of hibernating bats

Written by Jane Harris



In 2006, a caver in the USA discovered a bat with a white fungus on its nose and a number of dead bats. The following winter, there were more reports of hundreds of dead bats at several hibernation sites, all with the fungus around their noses. The term White-Nose Syndrome (WNS) was coined to describe this disease. Since then, WNS has caused massive mortality across Eastern North America and is spreading rapidly.



White-Nose Syndrome

Credit: Minnesota DNR Available at: <https://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2017/03/23/bat-disease-white-nose-syndrome/>

Research has shown that WNS is caused by a soil fungus called *Pseudogymnascus destructans* (Pd) which grows best in the cold temperatures found in winter hibernation sites. The fungus causes lesions on the wing membranes, ears and tail but especially around the nose. These infections are thought to irritate the bats and cause dehydration which both increase the frequency of arousals from hibernation. Repeated arousals use up precious stored fat each time, which leads to starvation.

There was huge concern that the fungus might also cause mortality of European bats. The Bat Conservation Trust immediately issued instructions to UK bat workers to look for symptoms of WNS during hibernation surveys and to disinfect boots, clothing and all equipment to avoid possible transmission between sites. Similar surveillance was carried out in Europe. As a result, the fungus has been identified in bats in eight European countries, including two sites in the UK; one in Kent and one in Norfolk. Pd is now thought to be native across Eurasia, but there have been no reports of mass mortality and no confirmation of the syndrome. It now seems likely that the fungus

was introduced to the US from Europe, and research is focussed on why bats do not succumb to WNS in areas where it is endemic.

Detailed sampling was undertaken during the last two winters in a number of hibernation sites in the UK, including one in Norfolk, as part of a US-led research programme. Bats and the underlying and surrounding surfaces were swabbed under a special licence. Soil samples were also taken and other environmental parameters recorded. The outcomes of the research show that reservoirs of Pd in hibernation sites in Europe and Asia decay during the summer, whereas those in US hibernation sites remain high. So bats in the US start hibernating in a highly contaminated environment which leads to infection during the hibernation period and subsequent mortality. Infection in Europe and Asia is delayed due to lower levels of Pd and does not cause significant infection before the end of the hibernation period.

There may be other factors which contribute to reduced mortality in Eurasia, such as a higher level of immunity evolved over many years, but these remain to be determined. For now, the target is to find ways of controlling the disease in the US, possibly by reducing the Pd reservoir in hibernation sites. In Europe, it is extremely important to continue surveillance of hibernation sites in case a more virulent strain of the fungus emerges in the future.



Little brown bats with White-Nose Syndrome

Credit: NYSDEC/Nancy Heaslip Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-11878001>

N. HEASLIP / NYDEC

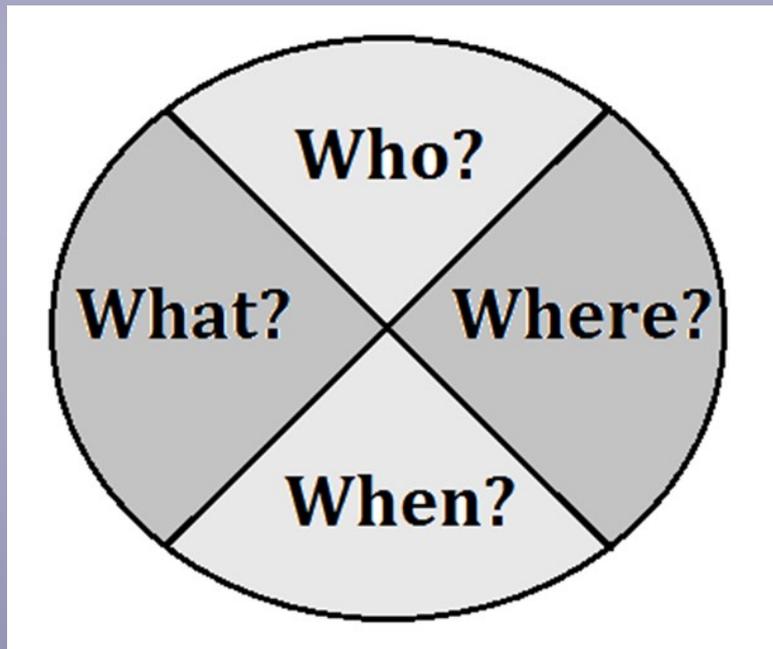


Submitting records to Norfolk Biodiversity Information Services (NBIS)

Add worth to your records

Did you know that Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) holds over 3.5 million records for species of fauna and flora throughout Norfolk. This data is used for wildlife conservation, management and protection, planning applications, science, research and natural history.

There are four essential components of a biological record, the four W's: **What** species? (Common name of scientific name is fine) **Where** was it recorded? (Ideally six figure grid reference or better) **When** was it recorded? **Who** recorded it?



How do I submit records?

Although NBIS does have an excel spreadsheet that is available for download [on the NBIS webpage](#), we understand that recorders may not have the time to convert their records to this format. NBIS can accept records in any format as long as they contain the four W's. We ask that these records are sent to nbis@norfolk.gov.uk. By submitting them to NBIS you could increase the worth of your records exponentially, impacting local, national and potentially even global conservation and policy.



Upcoming Events

For the most up to date list of events, please see the [Norwich Bat group website](#). Contact Lindsey Bilston for further details of any event via email enquiries@bats.org.uk.



Date	Event	Location
09/06/2019	NWT Community event	Bishop's House, Norwich
07/08/2019	Bat walk	Fairhaven
24/08/2019	International Bat Night— children's activities, talk and walk	Fairhaven
27/08/2019	Bat walk	Hoveton Great Broad
28/08/2019	Bat walk and talk	Whitlingham Country Park
30/08/2019	Bat walk	Quaker Wood, Diss
13/09/2019	Bat night with children's activities and walk	Gressenhall
14/09/2019	Bat walk	Strumpshaw Fen
17/09/2019	Bat walk and talk	Whitlingham Country Park
20/09/2019	Bat walk	Strumpshaw Fen
October— tbc	Festival of Nature as part of Norwich Science festival	
06/11/2019	Bats and gardening talk	Bodham near Holt