

A year in the Life of a Bat – and Lincolnshire Bat Group

JANUARY

Bats are tucked up for the winter hibernating – in a state of inactivity characterised by lower body temperature, slower breathing and lower metabolic rate....we hope.

Small pockets of LBG members are out surveying known Hibernation roost sites around the county. LBG also has the first meeting of the year, hopefully with an exciting speaker to give us thoughts of better weather.



FEBRUARY

Bats still hibernating. They are using up their fat reserves now so may leave the roost on warmer nights to seek food and a drink of water.

We do the same surveys again in February to get a better idea of just what bats are settled where.... in tunnels, bunkers, under jails, in palaces, ice houses and cellars.



MARCH

Bats may begin to emerge and limited signs of activity can be seen. As temperature rises small numbers can be observed feeding but in bad weather they may become torpid.

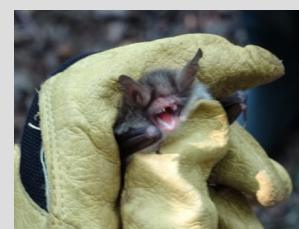
AGM time. We summarise what has happened during the previous year and choose a team to steer us through the coming 12 months. Sometimes there are constitution alterations and we like to have a guest speaker to liven up proceedings.



APRIL

Bats are mostly out of hibernation and hungry as well as active most nights. They may look at several roost sites and may return to torpor in bad weather.

Our first meeting with the new committee. Largely planning the summer activities : shows, events, walks, surveys



MAY

Bats are now fully active and feeding. The females are establishing maternity colonies and looking for nursery sites such as in buildings or trees. Males will roost either alone or in small groups.

This is when the LBG members get busy especially our bat carers and those who are out and about doing surveys for the group. Woodhall Spa Country Show is usually one of the first.



JUNE

The female bats usually give birth to a single pup which they feed. The young are very small with thin slightly grey fur. To keep up their energy adults can catch thousands of insects each every night.

Fitting the summer meeting in is a bit of a juggle because everyone is so busy but it is important to see if anyone needs particular help we can do something about. Lincolnshire County Show.



JULY

Mothers continue to suckle their young. Some will have grown fast and be nearly adult size whereas others may be underweight and slow to grow. Around 3 weeks is a crucial time and grounded young may be struggling to fly.

Another busy month out and about in the county with the start of bat walks and hopefully the start of Nathusius' Pipistrelle surveys.



AUGUST

The young bats begin catching their own insects at 6 weeks and no longer need their mother's milk. Summer maternity colonies begin to disperse and the adults move to mating roosts.

Roost counts, Surveys and shows.



SEPTEMBER

Beginning of the mating season. Males of most species have special calls to attract females – burrs, ckucks and buzzing. Bats are building up their fat reserves ready for the winter months.

Our Autumn meeting and more counts and surveys Tattershall Carrs bat box and bunker checks



OCTOBER

Mating continues and feeding up continues as it is crucial for bats to reach a decent weight before hibernation. They are also seeking out suitable hibernation sites and beginning periods of torpor.

More NNPP (Nathusius) surveys. Our carers have their annual meeting to compare notes and share any problems they are having.



NOVEMBER

The periods of torpor last longer and some bats begin hibernation. The next few months are colder and insects are harder to find so it makes sense to save energy.

Time for survey organisers to put their results together and send them to the County Records officer. We also help clean up Tattershall Church.



DECEMBER

Bats are hibernating using their stored fat as fuel to keep themselves ticking over. They may roost alone or in small groups in cool quiet places like disused buildings, tunnels, caves, old trees where they hope to remain undisturbed.

The December Social and Richard Green's fiendish batty quiz have become a focus for the group and allow us to relax together and look more objectively at the last year and what next year has in store.

