

Update from the National Bat Monitoring Programme

Meet the team!

The team has grown over the past year as we have continued to broaden the scope of the NBMP. Karen Haysom manages the team and develops the use of NBMP data in relation to reporting processes and practical conservation applications; Jules Agate and Philip Briggs manage the various projects and the training programme; Lucy Wright co-ordinates the core surveys, liaises with volunteers and manages the database; Jon Russ co-ordinates the Bats and Roadside Mammals Survey; and Helen Miller runs the new Bechstein's Bat Project.

How we use your data

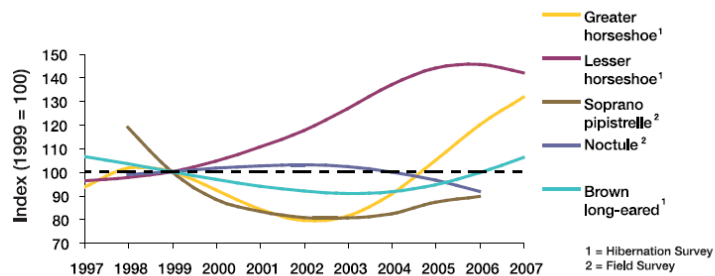
NBMP surveys are designed to produce annual species population trends. The most recent trends can be found in the latest NBMP annual report on the BCT website. These trends help inform which bat species are included on the priority list in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). In the most recent BAP review two bat species – noctule and brown long-eared – were added to the list due to concerns about the future stability of their populations based on current trends. NBMP data were also considered in the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's recent report on the implementation of the Habitats Directive.

We are in the process of making NBMP data available on the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) so that the records can be downloaded from the website (www.searchnbn.net). The aim of the NBN is to provide species and habitat data that will help individuals and organisations understand and preserve the UK's biodiversity. Currently data from the Waterway Survey and the Bats and Roadside Mammals Survey are available on the site, and shortly we will be adding data from the Field Survey. Sensitive



New project will increase our knowledge of the distribution of the rare Bechstein's bat

Trends for UK BAP species



records and confidential information such as observer details are not made available. Colony Count data are potentially sensitive so will go onto the NBN at an appropriate resolution in order to maintain site confidentiality. 1km resolution is likely but we are exploring different possibilities. Hibernation data are particularly sensitive so we will be contacting each surveyor to ask which sites can be included at 1km resolution; all other sites will be included at 10km resolution only. The other main recipients of our raw data are the local bat groups, to whom we send complete data for their counties on request.

A new project involves analysing NBMP Waterway Survey data alongside data from the Environment Agency's River Habitat Survey. We are building on work we carried out in 2003 which correlated Daubenton's bat activity with river habitat characteristics and water quality. The outcome will be a predictive model of Daubenton's bat distribution that will underpin our conservation and biodiversity indicators work.

BCT/MTUK Bats and Roadside Mammals Survey

In 2007, 17 bat groups gathered 3,839 bat records comprising 13 bat species/species groups and 416 records of other mammal species representing 25 species/species groups. This survey involves driving a 40km route with a time expansion bat detector clamped to the car window. Bats

calls are recorded for post-survey analysis, and other mammals observed are noted during the survey. For the majority of bat species the overall encounter rate has been relatively constant over the three year study period (2005-2007). The 2007 report is now available on the BCT website.

Bechstein's Bat Project

This new project aims to establish the distribution of Bechstein's bats in England and Wales, working closely with experts, volunteers and woodland owners/managers. The survey protocol is based on methods devised by Frank Greenaway and David Hill who will initially train four bat groups to participate in the summer 2008 survey season. Further groups across the species' range will be trained in the following two years. A full article on this project will appear in a future edition of *Bat News*.

Training workshops and talks

The NBMP team ran 29 workshops and talks across the UK in 2007, some of which were additionally funded by the Landfill Communities Fund through Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN). If you or your local volunteer group are interested in receiving training for NBMP surveys this summer, please get in touch with us or look on our training web page for details of local events.

More volunteers needed

We are keen to encourage more volunteers to get involved in 2008. We particularly need more help with the Field and Waterway surveys, so if you have experience of identifying bats in the field, please sign up! We also need more volunteers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. You don't need to be an expert to participate; we run surveys suitable for all levels of experience. If you would like to take part, more information and an online sign-up form are available at <http://www.bats.org.uk/nbmp/index.asp>, or you can contact us at nbmp@bats.org.uk or 0845 1300 228.