bat facts

Did you know?

There are 16 species of bats in the UK, all of which are tiny in comparison to their cousins the fruit bats. The smallest, a pipistrelle bat, weighs just 4g and the largest, a noctule bat up to 40g



- Bats are the only mammals that fly.
- Bats are warm blooded, give birth and suckle their young. They are very sociable animals, living together in colonies.
- They are long-lived (some can live for up to 20 years), are intelligent, highly mobile and more agile in flight than most birds.



- They fly and feed in the dark, which they are able to do by producing a stream of high-pitched calls and listening to the returning echoes which give a distinct 'sound' picture of the surroundings. This is called echolocation.
- British bats eat only insects which they catch in flight or pick off water, foliage or the ground.
- When there are few insects bats hibernate in cool parts of buildings, caves or hollow trees.

Bats do not
- Build nests
- Chew wood or plastic
- Get caught in your hair!
- Bring food into the roost

bat life

Where to see bats

Bats gather to feed where there are lots of insects such as woodland, traditional pasture, marshes, ponds and slow-moving rivers. They may also be seen hunting over town gardens, across commons and around street lights.

- Bats roost in trees, buildings, caves and under bridges.

- Bats choose their roosts very carefully, using many different sites through the year. They may return to the same roosts at the same time year after year.



- They are temporary seasonal visitors to buildings, usually when the females need somewhere warm to give birth and raise their young in the summer.
- Bats give birth to just one baby each year, which learns to fly and feed by following its mother from the roost.



A year in the life of a bat...

Jan • Feb • March
There aren't many insects to eat in winter so bats hibernate alone or in small groups. Sometimes they wake up and move to another roost.

April • May
Bats will be hungry and active. They may become torpid (cool and inactive) in bad weather. They roost in several sites and the females begin to form groups.

June • July
Females gather in maternity roosts. They give birth to young which are suckled for several weeks. Males usually roost alone nearby.

Aug • Sept
Mothers leave the roost before the young.
The bats mate and build up fat for the winter.

Oct • Nov • Dec
Bats look for a good place to spend the winter.
They become torpid for longer periods and then hibernate.

about us

Bat Conservation Trust... what do we do?

BCT is the UK's only national organisation solely devoted to the conservation of bats and their habitats.

It is a highly respected and established organisation combining the strengths of professionals and amateur experts.

We also...

- Operate a dedicated national bat helpline which supports and provides information to people who find bats in their property
- Support a network of over 90 voluntary bat groups
- Run the National Bat Monitoring Programme - the first programme of its kind to monitor bats on such a large scale
- Actively campaign for stronger measures for the protection of bats and for effective implementation
- Are at the forefront of bat research, project and survey method development
- Provide education and advice to all that come into contact with bats
- Have a strong membership base including the Young Batworker's Club
- Provide training for beginners and experts
- Are lead partner for four of the national bat Biodiversity Action Plans
- Have links with similar organisations internationally