

**26 Highdown Avenue
Emmer Green
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 8QS**

Bat Emergence Survey

Ref: R2540/a

June 2020



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1 SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Sarah Hall undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the house at 26 Highdown Avenue, Emmer Green, Berkshire.
- 1.1.2** The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals to be lodged with Reading Borough Council seeking consent for a two-storey side and rear extension.
- 1.1.3** A preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken in March 2020 and is reported separately (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, March 2020, R2493/a). The survey found a relatively low number (c. 20 droppings) of medium-sized bat droppings, of a size and shape typical of long-eared (*Plecotus* sp.) bats, in the main roof space. The property also had several external features that could provide opportunities for bats that roost in crevices such as the pipistrelles.
- 1.1.4** Further survey was recommended to confirm the status of the roost and to determine if any other roosts are present.
- 1.1.5** No bats were recorded emerging from the roost in the house during the surveys undertaken in May and June 2020. The findings, in combination with the findings of the preliminary roost inspection, confirm the likely current absence of roosting bats. The proposals are therefore highly unlikely to affect a bat roost or disturb/harm bats.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Sarah Hall undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the house at 26 Highdown Avenue, Emmer Green, Berkshire.
- 2.1.2** The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals to be lodged with Reading Borough Council seeking consent for a two-storey side and rear extension.
- 2.1.3** A preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken in March 2020 and is reported separately (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, March 2020, R2493/a). The survey found a relatively low number (c. 20 droppings) of medium-sized bat droppings, of a size and shape typical of long-eared (*Plecotus* sp.) bats, in the main roof space. The property also had several external features that could provide opportunities for bats that roost in crevices such as the pipistrelle species.
- 2.1.4** In order to determine if roosting bats are present or are likely absent, an emergence and/or re-entry survey was recommended, and this report presents the findings of these further surveys and recommendations.

2.2 Legislative Background

- 2.2.1** All British bat species are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations'). In summary, the legislation combined makes it an offence to:
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;
 - Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
 - Deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

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- 2.2.2** The government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species mitigation licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. A licence can be issued if the following three tests have been met:
- **Regulation 55(9)(a)** - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation, and;
 - **Regulation 55(9)(b)** - the derogation "will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range" and;
 - **Regulation 55(2)(e)** - the derogation is for the purposes of "preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment".
- 2.2.3** Local authorities have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3e) of the Habitat Regulations to have regard to requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions. The Council must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by applications where survey findings show that European Protected Species mitigation licensing is necessary, before granting any necessary planning consents.
- 2.2.4** European Protected Species mitigation licence applications can be submitted once all necessary planning consents have been granted and Natural England aim to issue a licence decision within 30 working days.
- 2.2.5** Licensable projects affecting small numbers of seven commonly occurring bat species may fall under the remit of the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (WML-CL21). The Class Licence permits 'Registered Consultants' to carry out licensable operations on site on behalf of clients following the registration of sites with Natural England at least 15 working days before the work is due to start.
- 2.2.6** Survey data supporting EPS licence applications or the registration of the site under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (WML-CL21) must be up to date i.e. have been conducted within the current or most recent optimal survey season i.e. May to August. Therefore, if surveys show bats are present, and

licensable work is delayed until the next survey season, updated surveys will be required to support an application or site registration.

2.3 Site Location and Context

2.3.1 The house is situated on the southern side of Highdown Avenue in Emmer Green, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 71029 76873).

2.3.2 The dwelling is surrounded by other residential properties and their gardens on all sides. A patch of grazed grassland is situated 25 metres to the west, which adjoins a patch of deciduous woodland approximately 110 metres to the west. Beyond the woodland is a golf course with patches of woodland and scattered trees amongst the grassland. The habitats in close vicinity of the property offer good quality foraging habitat for bats within the local area.

2.4 Report Format

2.4.1 The report is set out as follows: **Section 3** presents a description of the survey methods; **Section 4** summarises the findings of the detector surveys; and **Section 5** presents a discussion of the survey findings and recommendations; **Appendix 1** presents plans of the emergence survey findings; and **Appendix 2** presents the raw survey data.

3 SURVEY METHOD

3.1 Evening Emergence Survey

3.1.1 Evening emergence surveys were undertaken on 12th May 2020, 27th May 2020 and 8th June 2020. Each survey was carried out by two surveyors: one surveyor was situated to the front north western side of the building on the driveway (Survey Location 1); and the second surveyor was situated to the south eastern side of the house in the rear garden (Survey Location 2).

3.1.2 The first two emergence survey were undertaken with the aid of two Echometer Touch Pro detectors and the third emergence survey was undertaken with the use of an Anabat SD1 in combination of a Batbox Duet Detector, and with an Anabat Scout.

3.1.3 The Echo Meter Touch recordings were converted to ZC files in Kaleidoscope before being analysed using the AnalookW computer software package along with the Anabat SD1 and Scout recordings.

3.1.4 The evening emergence survey started 15 minutes before sunset and continued until 1.5 hours after sunset.

3.2 Background Data Search

3.2.1 The Berkshire and South Bucks Bat Group was commissioned to carry out a search of data held by the Group for the site and land within a 2 km radius.

3.3 Survey Constraints

3.3.1 There were no significant constraints to the emergence surveys, which were undertaken at a suitable time of year for undertaking emergence and re-entry surveys i.e. May to August (Collins 2016) and in conditions suitable for bat activity i.e. dry with air temperatures above 10°C.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Evening Emergence Survey – 12th May 2020

- 4.1.1** No bats emerged from the building during the survey. The earliest bat was an unseen common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) recorded 22 minutes after sunset.
- 4.1.2** The amount of bat activity was relatively low with a lot of distant passes of pipistrelle bats heard but not observed with a few common pipistrelle passes recorded primarily flying towards the north along the eastern side of the house. A noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) was recorded on one occasion commuting from the south to northwest by the western side of the house.

4.2 Evening Emergence Survey – 27th May 2020

- 4.2.1** No bats emerged from the building during the survey. The earliest bat was an unseen distant pass by a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) recorded 20 minutes after sunset. The amount of bat activity was similar to the first survey with common pipistrelle bats being the most frequently recorded with some unseen passes and a few passes from the north and south along the eastern side of the house. A pipistrelle species was also recorded a few times flying north by the south eastern corner of the rear garden. A soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) was recorded a couple of times and was observed on one occasion flying west from the western side of the house.

4.3 Evening Emergence Survey – 8th June 2020

- 4.3.1** No bats emerged from the building during the survey. The earliest bat was a pass by a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) recorded 6 minutes after sunset. The amount of bat activity was similar to the first two surveys with common pipistrelle bats being the most frequently recorded with some unseen passes and a few passes from the south to north along the eastern side of the house. At least four common pipistrelle bats were recorded emerging from the gable end of the neighbouring property to the east between 21:32 and 21:42, all flying towards the north across the road. A soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) was recorded a couple of times and was observed flying over the rear garden and flying around the front of the house and over the garage. A noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) was recorded on one occasion by the surveyor to the front of the house.

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4.4 Background Data Search Findings

- 4.4.1** The data held by the Berkshire and South Bucks Bat Group includes records of at least ten species within a 2 kilometre radius of the site: common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), whiskered/Brandt's bat (*Myotis mystacinus/brandtii*), Natterer's (*Myotis nattereri*), Daubenton's (*Myotis nattereri*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), Leisler's (*Nyctalus leisleri*), brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) and serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*).
- 4.4.2** Within the last 10 years, there are records of approximately 63 sites with bat records, of which at least 36 were confirmed as bat roosts.
- 4.4.3** The records collected within the last 10 years from sites closest to the property are for: common pipistrelle bats and long eared bats (*Plecotus sp.*) recorded in flight at a property along Highdown Avenue approximately 100 metres to the east recorded in 2015. A soprano pipistrelle bat was recorded emerging from the property and common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, a *Myotis* species, and noctule were recorded in flight nearby at a property along Highdown Hill Road approximately 270 metres to the south east in 2017. Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's, Natterer's, whiskered/Brandt's, long eared species, and noctule were all recorded within the same kilometre square as the site with records from between 2011 and 2017. A soprano pipistrelle bat was observed roosting and a common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long eared bats and whiskered/Brandt's bats were recorded in flight at Brooklyn Drive approximately 600 metres to the east.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Status

- 5.1.1** The preliminary survey findings indicated likely use of the house as a day roost and/or transitional occasional by brown long eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*) and identified crevice roosting features with potential for use by species such as the pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus* spp.). The emergence survey findings in combination with the findings of a search of pre-existing data held by the Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire Bat Group suggests that it is unlikely that bats are currently roosting in the house. However, the droppings and evidence of bats roosting in nearby houses suggests that it is likely that roosting bats could be present in the future.

5.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

- 5.2.1** The survey data shows that the planned extension is unlikely to damage or destroy a roost or lead to the disturbance of bats occupying a roost, and therefore could go ahead lawfully with no requirement for a European Protected Species mitigation licence.
- 5.2.2** The proposed works will be destroying features that have in the past been used by bats and continue to have the potential to be used by bats in the future, and as such, there is a chance that bats (which are highly mobile and roosting nearby) could be present when the work commences. Therefore, precautionary measures will be adopted during the building work as set out in 5.3 below.

5.3 Precautionary Measures

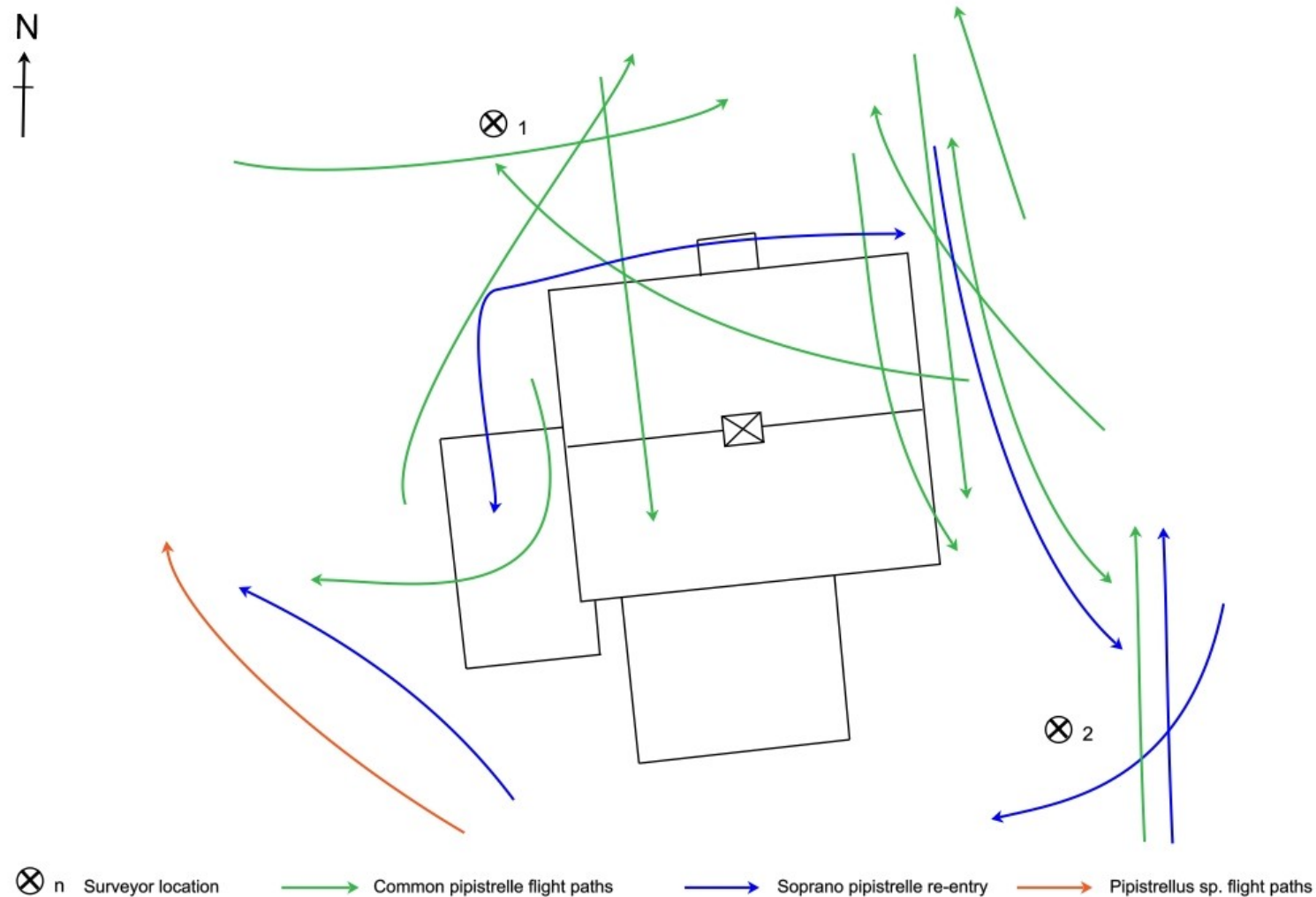
- 5.3.1** The building contractors will be briefed by a licensed ecologist on the legislation protecting bats and their roosts, measures to minimise the impact of the building work on bats - i.e. soft strip of tiles necessary to link the new and old extensions by gloved hands - and procedures to follow should bats be encountered during the work. Specifically, the contractors will be advised that they must not handle bats and must call a licensed ecologist to site to attend to the bat(s) and provide further advice. They will be advised that work must stop until further written advice has been received.
- 5.3.2** The works will also be preceded by a repeat inspection of the loft space for the presence of bats by a licensed ecologist. If bats are present, the

building work will begin only when the licensed ecologist has provided further written advice, and if necessary, a European Protected Species mitigation licence or confirmation of the site's registration under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (if applicable) has been obtained.

6 REFERENCES

- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.
- Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual* (3rd Edition). JNCC, Peterborough.
- Richardson, P. (2000). *Distribution atlas of bats in Britain and Ireland 1980 – 1999*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Schofield, H. W. & Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). *The Bats of Britain and Ireland*. Vincent Wildlife Trust, Ledbury

APPENDIX 1 – BAT EMERGENCE SURVEY FINDINGS



Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	26 Highdown Avenue Emmer Green	
VP	June 2020	Not to scale	Emergence survey findings	

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APPENDIX 2 - BAT EMERGENCE RAW SURVEY DATA

Evening Emergence Survey - 12th May 2019

Survey date: 12/05/20 Location 1: Front north western side on the drive Surveyor: John Wenman Detector: Echometer Touch Pro Weather conditions: Dry, fine, 1/8 cloud cover to 7/8 cloud cover, calm, 13°C Start time: 20:30 Sunset: 20:45 Finish time: 22:15		
Time	Species	Survey notes
21:07	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
21:08	Common pipistrelle	Flew north towards the north eastern side of the house.
21:11	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
21:13 – 21:14	Common pipistrelle	Flew north towards the north eastern side of the house and foraging unseen.
21:17	Pipistrelle species	Distant foraging heard not seen.
21:19	Pipistrelle species	Distant pass heard not seen.
21:27	Pipistrelle species	Distant pass heard not seen.
21:33	Pipistrelle species	Distant pass heard not seen.
21:36	Pipistrelle species	Distant pass heard not seen.
21:38	Common pipistrelle	Distant pass heard not seen.
21:40	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen
22:08	Noctule	Pass heard not seen

Survey date: 12/05/20 Location 2: South eastern corner of the house Surveyor: Janine Wenman Detector: Echometer Touch Pro and Anabat SD2 Weather conditions: Dry, fine, 1/8 cloud cover to 7/8 cloud cover, calm, 13°C Start time: 20:30 Sunset: 20:45 Finish time: 22:15		
Time	Species	Survey notes
21:04	Soprano pipistrelle	Flew south towards the eastern side of the house.
21:17	Pipistrelle species	Flew south to north west by the western side of the house.

Evening Emergence Survey - 27th May 2019

Survey date: 27/05/20 Location 1: Front north western side on the drive Surveyor: John Wenman Detector: Echometer Touch Pro Weather conditions: Dry, fine, 0/8 cloud cover, calm – light breeze, 22 - 16°C Start time: 20:52 Sunset: 21:07 Finish time: 22:37		
Time	Species	Survey notes
21:27	Common pipistrelle	Distant pass heard not seen.
21:29	Common pipistrelle	Distant pass heard not seen.
21:30	Common pipistrelle	Flew north by eastern side of the house.
21:31	Soprano pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
21:32	Common pipistrelle	Distant pass heard not seen.
21:33	Common pipistrelle	Flew north to south by the eastern side of the house.
21:33	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
21:34	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
21:34	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
21:37	Common pipistrelle	Flew north to south by the eastern side of the house.
21:42	Common pipistrelle	Brief pass heard not seen.
21:49	Common pipistrelle	Flew west to east along the front of the house.
21:49	Soprano pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
22:05	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
22:06	Common pipistrelle	Flew from the southeast to north along western side of the house.
22:10	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
22:12	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.

Survey date: 27/05/20

Location 2: South eastern corner of the house

Surveyor: Janine Wenman

Detector: Echometer Touch Pro

Weather conditions: Dry, fine, 0/8 cloud cover, calm – light breeze, 22 - 16°C

Start time: 20:52

Sunset: 21:07

Finish time: 22:37

Time	Species	Survey notes
21:33	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
21:34	Pipistrelle species	Flew south to north by the south eastern corner of the garden.
21:36	Pipistrelle species	Flew south to north by the south eastern corner of the garden.
21:42	Pipistrelle species	Flew south to north by the south eastern corner of the garden.
21:49	Soprano pipistrelle	Flew south to north by the south eastern corner of the garden.
22:08	Common pipistrelle	Flew west from the western side of the house.

Evening Emergence Survey - 8th June 2020

Survey date: 08/06/20

Location 1: Front north western side on the drive

Surveyor: Vicky Potts

Detector: Anabat SD2 and Batbox Duet

Weather conditions: 14°C, occasional cloud and still, turning to overcast and BF2 wind

Start time: 21:04

Sunset: 21:19

Finish time: 22:59

Time	Species	Survey notes
21:25	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
21:30	Common pipistrelle	Flew south from over the road and over eastern side of the house.
21:32	Common pipistrelle	Emerged from the house to the east and flew towards the west over the road.
21:34	Common pipistrelle	Brief pass heard not seen.
21:40	Common pipistrelle x 2	Two bats emerged from the house and flew north.
21:42	Common pipistrelle	Bat emerged from the house and flew north.
21:43	Common pipistrelle	Flew from the garden of the house next door - possible emergence from the neighbouring property.
21:47	Soprano pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
21:51	Soprano pipistrelle	Flew from the east to the south in the rear garden.
21:52	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
21:53	Common pipistrelle	Foraging heard not seen.
21:55 – 22:02	Common pipistrelle	Continuous foraging heard not seen.
22:02	Soprano pipistrelle	Flew west across the front of the house and over the garage then back to the east.
22:03	Soprano pipistrelle	Flew south along eastern side of the house.
22:06	Common pipistrelle	Two passes heard not seen.
22:07	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
22:13	Common pipistrelle	Flew south over the house from behind surveyor.
22:14	Soprano pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
22:17	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
22:27	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
22:30	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
22:30	Soprano pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
22:38	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard not seen.
22:39	Noctule	Pass heard not seen.

Survey date: 08/06/2020

Location 2: South eastern corner of the house

Surveyor: Meghan Porter

Detector: Anabat Scout 558032

Weather conditions: 14°C, occasional cloud and still, turning to overcast and BF2 wind

Start time: 21:04

Sunset: 21:19

Finish time: 22:49

Time	Species	Survey notes
21:30	Common pipistrelle	From north to south.

21:32	Common pipistrelle	Saw flying quick east to north.
21:40	Common pipistrelle	Two bats - both flew east (neighbours house/garden) to north.
21:42	Common pipistrelle	Flew east to north in neighbours house/garden.
21:43	Common pipistrelle	Flew east to north to west in front of house.
21:51	Soprano pipistrelle	Heard not seen.
21:58	Soprano pipistrelle	From north to southeast.
22:02	Common pipistrelle	Flew east to north to west.
22:02	Soprano pipistrelle	Flew from north to southeast.
22:13	Soprano pipistrelle	Heard not Seen.
22:16	Pipistrelle species	Heard not seen.
22:26	Pipistrelle species	Heard not seen.
22:29	Pipistrelle species	Heard not seen.
22:30	Soprano pipistrelle	Heard not seen.