



Bat Facts

Bats are mammals

Like people bats are mammals, warm blooded, give birth and suckle their young. They are also long-lived (up to 30 years), intelligent and have a complex social life. In Britain there are 17 species, all of which only eat insects and are small (between 4 and 40g).

Bats are the only true flying mammals. Their wings are formed from skin which stretches over extended finger bones.



Photograph by Highgate Bat Conservation Trust

Bats echolocate



Photograph by Highgate Bat Conservation Trust

Bats use echolocation, which is a stream of high-pitched calls. They listen to the echoes, to produce a sound picture of their surroundings, enabling them to catch insects, even in complete darkness. Some bats specialise in catching larger insects such as beetles or moths whilst others eat large numbers of very small insects, such as midges and mosquitoes. One bat can consume up to 3000 insects a night!

Bats hibernate

Bats hibernate over winter when insects are scarce. In autumn they put on weight and then as the weather gets colder, find sheltered roosts to hibernate in.

During the spring and summer female bats roost together in maternity colonies to give birth and rear their young. One baby is born each year, it feeds until it is weaned at 5 weeks. Once the baby is independent, the colony breaks up and the bats move to other roosts.



Photograph by Highgate Bat Conservation Trust

Bats in England

There are 17 species of bats in England:

Common pipistrelle
Brown long-eared
Natterer's
Bechstein's
Leisler's
Lesser horseshoe

Soprano pipistrelle
Grey long-eared
Whiskered
Barbastelle
Serotine
Noctule

Nathusius' pipistrelle
Daubenton's
Brandt's
Greater mouse-eared
Greater horseshoe

Produced by the Avon Biodiversity Partnership as part of the Avon Biodiversity Action Plan, and funded by North Somerset Council, 2006

