

## BAT SURVEY AT WOOLSTON EYES, 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2007

Earlier in the evening there had been heavy rain, and it was still overcast with some drizzle when we met in Weir Lane, but by the time the survey began the rain had stopped and it was very humid.

### Survey

The bats were located using bat detectors which pick up the bats' echo-location calls and displays them on a screen as readings in kilohertz (kHz). Each species of bat echo-locates at a different frequency and the species can thus be determined from the readings.

We walked into No.3 bed and followed the main path in an anticlockwise direction to the main hide, from where we watched the water fowl until dusk. The sun set at 9.42 p.m. At the main hide we heard the first Noctule at 10.25 p.m. and the first Soprano Pipistrelle at 10.30p.m. At 10.45 p.m. we moved off from the main hide and walked along the path where we heard the first Common Pipistrelle at 10.50 p.m. We stopped at the platform at 10.55 p.m. and then continued along the path to the last platform and the meadow area with the crop of winter bird feed. At about 11.20 p.m. we reached the area of open grassland and copses of trees where a lot of bird ringing takes place and it was noticeable that there were many Pipistrelles of both species in this part of the bed.

We left No.3 bed and passed over the footbridge at about 11.28 p.m., and on looking over the bridge found one Daubenton's Bat. At 11.45 we paused briefly by the Ship Canal, and then returned to the footbridge and were surprised that there were no Daubenton's. There were, however, a lot of Soprano Pipistrelles.

We finished the survey at midnight.

### Species encountered

Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*

Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*

Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentonii*

Noctules were present and heard regularly throughout the survey, echo-locating at between 22 and 33 kHz. Both species of pipistrelles were heard throughout the whole of the survey, although not in the high numbers we thought might be present. Soprano Pipistrelles were the most common species of bat on No.3 bed –these echo-locate at 55 kHz, and we also found a small number of Common Pipistrelles, which echo-locate at 45 kHz. Both species of pipistrelles were most active around and between the area of grassland and woodland where the ringing takes place. Most surprisingly, only one Daubenton's bat was heard - this was a species we had expected to find in large numbers given its particular affinity to water.

We had expected bat numbers to be high at Woolston, and so were surprised at the low numbers we recorded. It is suspected that the weather played an important part in this because the survey followed many days of heavy downpours, and it had also been

raining heavily during the day of the survey. These conditions might well have lowered the numbers of insects available on No.3 bed at the time of the survey. As noted above, we were surprised at the lack of Daubenton's bats which hunt over water, often skimming the surface to pick up prey; we had expected them to be present in good numbers.

**Sonia Allen**  
**South Lancashire Bat Group**

**An additional record**

On 11<sup>th</sup> April, a very warm evening, there were at least 20 Noctules feeding between the John Morgan and Frank Linley hides, taking advantage of the high numbers of insects.

**Brian Martin**