



Daubenton's Bat

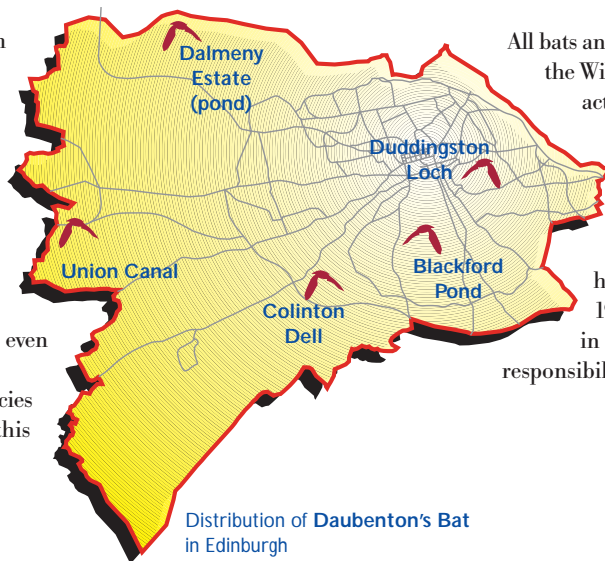
(Myotis daubentoni)

STATUS & ECOLOGY

Although Daubenton's bat is widespread in the UK, its pre-breeding population is estimated at only 150,000. The species has only been recorded from a small number of freshwater habitats in Edinburgh, and no detailed information is available on local populations or their distribution.

Temperate bat species rely on the presence of insect-rich foraging habitats which can provide enough food during the summer to sustain them throughout the year. In winter, they rely on fat reserves and spend much time in hibernation unless temperatures are high enough for insect activity to allow efficient foraging. Daubenton's bats generally forage over freshwater, particularly smooth-flowing rivers with bankside tree cover, but also canals, lochs and even quite small ponds. The limited records of the species from Edinburgh reflect this behaviour.

Bats also require a range of roosting sites, for breeding in summer and hibernation in winter. Daubenton's bat summer roosts, including nursery roosts where the females of a colony gather to give birth and raise their single young, are found in hollows in mature or dead trees, crevices in the stonework of bridges and occasionally in buildings. Winter roosts are in caves, mines, tunnels, bridge stonework and possibly tree hollows. Very few roosts are known nationally and none have been located in Edinburgh.



All bats and their roost sites are given protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Any planned activity which might affect bats or their roosts, whether occupied or not, requires prior consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage. Daubenton's bat is included in Appendix II of the Bern Convention, Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural habitats, etc) Regulations 1994, and in the 1991 Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe (Bonn Convention), extending the responsibility to the protection of key feeding areas.

“This bat is a deceptively fast flyer. On summer nights a number of them can be seen hunting together, hawking low over the water like swallows, and breaking the surface to drink on the wing”

David Stephen

FACTORS CAUSING LOSS OR DECLINE

Impacts

Because they often roost in tree hollows and crevices in stonework, Daubenton's bats are especially vulnerable to catastrophic impacts from insensitive maintenance work and the loss of veteran trees. They are highly mobile and may travel 5 kilometres or more between their roosts and feeding sites each night. Therefore loss or degradation of key foraging sites, particularly insect-rich riparian and woodland edge habitats, and corridors which provide flightlines may affect populations over a wide area.

Threats

Continued development pressure on green space and corridors within the urban area, together with further encroachment on surrounding countryside, is likely to remain the main underlying threat to existing Daubenton's bat populations and the establishment of new ones.

CURRENT ACTION

Daubenton's bat is identified by the UK Biodiversity Group as a 'Species of Conservation Concern' but no UK Action Plan is to be produced. However, Daubenton's bat is a target species for the Bat Conservation Trust's National Bat Monitoring Programme.

Scottish Natural Heritage has a statutory responsibility to provide advice to householders, developers, building and timber treatment contractors, etc, where conflicts with the needs of bats may arise. Lothian Bat Group members assist in this role, through the voluntary contracted batworker scheme.

ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

Objectives

To maintain, and steadily increase, the existing populations and range of Daubenton's bat in Edinburgh.

Targets

To identify and maintain principal and potential Daubenton's bat roosts, foraging habitats and flyways in Edinburgh. To continue developing awareness of bat requirements, including giving specific advice in cases where conflicts of interest may arise.

Actions

Establish and maintain a comprehensive record of Daubenton's bat roost sites in Edinburgh from Summer 2000.

(Actioned by: Lothians Bat Group, Bat Conservation Trust & Scottish Natural Heritage)

Identify key Daubenton's bat foraging habitats and flyways in Edinburgh by Autumn 2000, and sites and corridors of potential importance by Autumn 2001.

(Actioned by: Lothians Bat Group & Scottish Natural Heritage)

Devise and initiate a monitoring programme for Daubenton's bat in Edinburgh from Spring 2002, focusing on existing and potentially important roosts, habitats and corridors.

(Actioned by: Lothians Bat Group & Scottish Natural Heritage)

Ensure that, from Summer 1999, development proposals do not affect the integrity of known Daubenton's bat roosting and foraging sites.

(Actioned by: Lothians Bat Group, Bat Conservation Trust, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage & City of Edinburgh Council City Development Department)

Encourage, through the production and dissemination of appropriate guidance, inclusion of features of value to Daubenton's bat in the design stage of buildings, developments and landscaping, from Winter 2001.

(Actioned by: Lothians Bat Group, Bat Conservation Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage & City of Edinburgh Council Department's of City Development & Recreation)

Key Contacts

Lothians Bat Group
Scottish Natural Heritage
Bat Conservation Trust
Scottish Wildlife Trust
City of Edinburgh Council (City Development)
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CHAMPIONS

