

1st June - Bat Survey

The area bat survey of Thursday 1st June was undertaken by quite a small number of enthusiasts.

A preliminary investigation to determine the presence of bats in Ravensdowne, examining window sills for droppings, and using the detectors to locate pre-emergence activity, drew a complete blank.

Around 9.30 p.m., a watch was begun in the Avenue/Town Walls area. The watch was terminated at 10.15 p.m. as no bats had been detected.

The whole tenor of the evening changed on the return to cars at the Parade car park, via the Town Walls. Bats were detected at the top of Kipper Hill, between the Cleet Court flats overlooking the Walls and the Kipper Hill house. More bats were located to the east of the house, in the low-lying grassy/young trees area between the house gable and the town allotments. The bats were feeding at a low level, and two bats were seen flying from this area towards the group of trees beyond the Walls, beside the swing park and above Pier Road. Almost immediately, a bat was seen returning from that area; most certainly a third bat.

Continuing around the Walls, bats were detected in the grassy ditch, below the Walls footpath and outside the Ravensdowne gardens, from the Magazine (at Lions House) to the Barracks Gymnasium - a favourite daytime feeding area for swallows.

The calls registered by the bat detector at Kipper Hill were identified as pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), at 45kHz, but the bat calls received from the ditch were less clear, probably because they were at the range limit of the detector.

The feeding behaviour of the bats was probably very much influenced by the brisk, westerly breeze that sprang up as the evening progressed. The bats at Kipper Hill, and along the ditch, were clearly feeding at a low level in conditions sheltered from the breeze. The group of trees near the swing park, and sheltered by the Walls, would provide a similar scenario.

Berwick Wildlife Group

Follow-up surveys to try to identify roost sites are scheduled for the evenings of Thursday 8th (or, if wet, Friday 9th) June and Thursday 15th (if wet, Fri 16th) June.

Leslie, 2nd June 2006