

We are lucky enough to have 18 species of bat in the UK

Bats are not blind. All bat species are able to see but not all have the same eyesight. Some bat species, like flying foxes have great night vision and species that feed on nectar or pollinate flowers can see ultraviolet light. In the UK, bat species don't have very good night-vision (a bit like humans) so they rely on echolocation to navigate, hunt and 'see' the world.

Bats are the only true flying mammal. There are over 1,400 species of bats in the world, and more are still being discovered. Bats account for more than a quarter of mammal species in the UK and around 20% of all mammal species worldwide.

Bats can be as large as a small dog or as small as a bee. The largest bats are the flying foxes with wingspans of up to 2 metres and body weights of up to 1.5 kilograms. At the other end of the scale is the bumblebee bat, weighing only 2 grams - the world's smallest mammal!

A tiny pipistrelle can eat up to 3,000 insects in a night.

The majority of the world's bats eat insects - just like British bats. In the tropics bats also eat foods like fruit, flowers, frogs, fish, blood, even other bats.

Bats usually only have one baby a year and can live for up to 30 years

The place a bat lives is called its roost. Bats need different roosting conditions at different times of the year and they will often move around to find a roost that meets their needs. Some bats prefer hollow trees, some like caves and some use both at different times. Many bats shelter in buildings, behind hanging tiles and boarding or in roof spaces. For several weeks in summer, female bats gather in a maternity roost to have their babies. In winter, bats use hibernation roosts. Bats have been discovered roosting in all sorts of places, but there are three broad roost types that are the most common: roosts in trees, roosts in built structures and roosts in underground sites. Bats may also roost in bat boxes.

UK bats do not construct roosts, but use structures that are already available.

Bats are not rodents and they don't nibble on wood, wires and other bits and pieces in buildings.

When the weather gets warmer, usually in early summer, pregnant female bats gather together in warm, safe places to have their babies. These roosts are called maternity roosts. Some groups of bats return to the same site every year.

A bat's pregnancy lasts between six and nine weeks. The length of the pregnancy depends on the species and can be influenced by weather, climate and availability of food. Bats usually give birth to a single baby (called a pup) each year. They keep their babies close and nurture them carefully. The young bats are suckled by their mothers for four to five weeks until they are old enough to fly. They then begin to venture out from the roost to forage for food.

Bats are very sensitive during the maternity season and may abandon their young if they are disturbed. As warm, dry indoor spaces like lofts are often ideal for maternity colonies, it's very important to check for bats before carrying out any building or remedial work.

The common pipistrelle is one of the commonest British bats, weighing around 5 grams (same as a 20p piece).

A single pipistrelle can eat thousands of tiny insects in just one night!

They are the species you are most likely to see around your garden.



The scientific name of the common pipistrelle is *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*.

UK Bats

Alcathoe bat

Barbastelle

Bechstein's bat

Brandt's bat

Brown long-eared bat

Common pipistrelle

Daubenton's bat

Greater horseshoe bat

Grey long-eared bat

Leisler's bat

Lesser horseshoe bat

Nathusius' pipistrelle

Natterer's bat

Noctule

Serotine

Soprano pipistrelle

Whiskered bat

Greater mouse-eared bat