Newsletter | May 2014

Vincent Wildlife News

Polecat © Anne Newton

We were profoundly saddened by the death earlier this year of our friend, founder and primary benefactor, The Honourable Vincent Weir. To quote our chairman: "Never has the prefix 'Honourable' been more apt for this most kindly, honest and generous man. Without Vincent's vision and support to us, and indeed to many other nature conservation causes, we would not be here, and nor would much of Britain's wildlife. We will miss him."

Today, Vincent has indeed inspired The Vincent Wildlife Trust to extend its impact and reach across the whole of the UK and Ireland as well as into continental Europe, to take forward our conservation and research plans for the mammal species we feel most need our help. As you will see from this newsletter, we are leading on several national projects and are increasingly providing support for other projects and working in partnership with a number of bodies.

Thank you to all our funders, partners, volunteers, staff and trustees who have helped us to get this far - Vincent's legacy has not been left behind, it will be forever going forward!

Natalie Buttriss, Chief Executive Officer

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The VWT's new Pine Marten Recovery Project

By Jenny Macpherson, *Senior Pine Marten Officer*

The VWT has just embarked on an exciting new project to assess the feasibility of reinforcing pine marten numbers in England and Wales.

There have been few verifiable records of pine marten in southern Britain in recent years, despite concerted detection efforts, which suggests that marten are not abundant and that populations here have failed to recover from their historical decline. This is very different from the situation in Scotland and Ireland, where pine marten populations are now recovering well and expanding back into their former ranges.

Sightings reports and occasional unequivocal records, including a marten found dead on the road in mid-Wales in 2012, suggest that pine marten are still present in parts of Wales and northern England but in such low numbers that population viability is highly vulnerable. As a result of this VWT have begun work on the feasibility study as part of our pine marten recovery project.

Photo: *Pine marten © James A Moore*

In the initial stage we are using GIS methods to determine where there is suitable habitat of sufficient size and connectivity to support a viable self-sustaining population of pine marten. Once these areas have been identified, there will be further analyses to evaluate the risks of accidental mortality to pine marten, from density of roads and other infrastructure, and also to identify potential areas of conflict with local economic interests. Once this is completed we will be able to shortlist a number of potential release areas for more detailed field surveys and fine scale habitat assessment.

Starting in the summer of this year, field surveys will determine if adequate prey and other food sources are present at the shortlisted sites to support a healthy pine marten population. In addition to this we will be collecting baseline data at potential release sites to enable long-term monitoring of potential impacts of increased pine marten numbers on other species present, including grey squirrel. We will also be working to identify local stakeholders and co-operators and engaging with them to raise awareness of pine marten and answer any queries, and also to discuss the potential impacts and benefits of an increased pine marten population in their area.

By the end of next year we will have a prioritised list of the most biologically suitable release sites that have minimal potential conflict and high levels of local support for the project. During 2015 we will be reviewing all the available data to determine the most genetically appropriate source population(s) for animals and preparing a detailed plan for translocation and release of animals at the first sites.

Plotting the path of the polecat: National Polecat Survey launched

By Lizzie Croose, *Projects Support Officer*

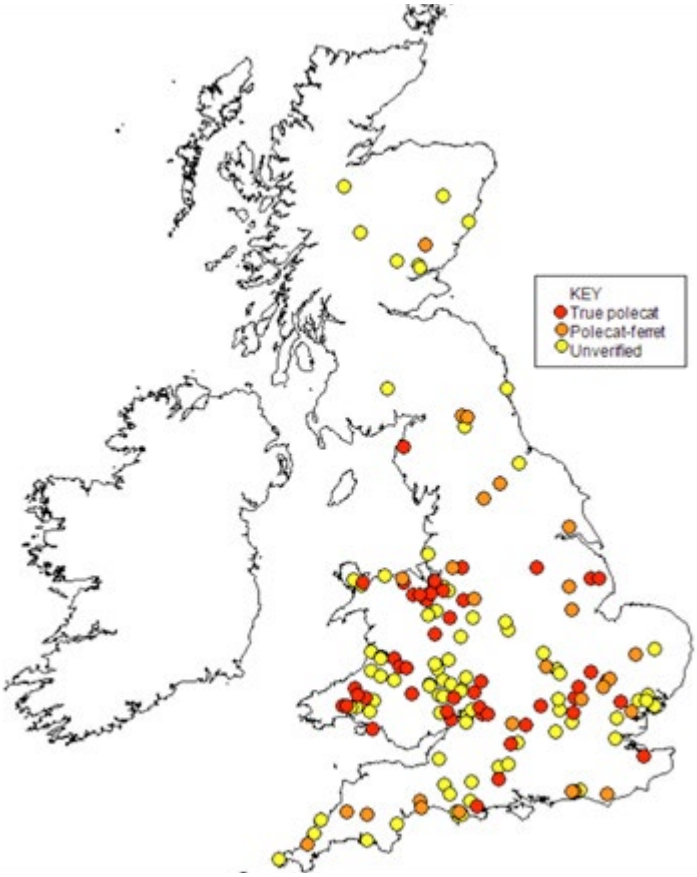
The VWT's third national polecat survey was launched at the beginning of this year and we are appealing for records of polecats, polecat-ferrets and feral ferrets from all over Britain during 2014 and 2015.

The polecat population in Britain experienced a severe historical decline as a result of decades of persecution for protection of poultry and demand for their fur. By the early 20th century, the polecat had become extinct in most of Britain and was confined to a small area of mid Wales and the English border counties. Thanks to a reduction in persecution pressure and an increase in rabbit populations, the polecat population is now recovering and returning to many areas from which it has been absent for over 100 years.

The polecat's rarity led the Trust to become involved in conservation-led research of polecats in the 1990s. The Trust has carried out two distribution surveys in the 1990s and 2000s to provide reliable information on polecat range expansion and distribution. The results of these surveys demonstrate that polecats have expanded their range from their historical Welsh stronghold and have spread into much of central and southern England. Outlier populations are present in north-west England and parts of Scotland and are a result of reintroductions.

Photo: *Polecat-ferret under garden shed*

Photo: *Polecat © Jane Parsons*



For the current polecat survey, which began in January, the Trust will gather up-to-date information on current distribution patterns and investigate levels of hybridisation between polecats and ferrets. Between January and April, 185 records of polecats and polecat-ferrets were received (see map).

The majority of these were of road casualty animals: the number of polecats killed on roads peaks in February and March as the mating season approaches and males cross roads without paying due attention! These records are a great start although during the previous distribution survey in 2004-2006 over 1,200 records were received, so we have a fair way to go to beat that!

Map:
Records of polecats, polecat-ferrets and unverified specimens received between January and April 2014

Help with our National Polecat Survey

We need your help in reporting records of polecats, polecat-ferrets and feral ferrets, dead or alive, from all over the UK.

If you see or have seen a polecat, polecat-ferret or feral ferret, please email **elizabethcroose@vwt.org.uk**, phone **01531 636441,** or visit **www.vwt.org.uk**.

Records should ideally include the date and grid reference and if the animal is dead, a photo and/or carcass. Carcasses will be used for rodenticide analysis and genetic studies and a postage box can be supplied in which the carcass can be returned, free of charge.

The Trust has received assistance with the storage of carcasses from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH).

Our People & Pine Marten in Wales - project update

By David Bavin, *People and Pine Martens in Wales Project Officer*

This project is funded by:
The co-operative membership
Cymru/Wales

Our People & Pine Marten in Wales project is chugging on well, working towards its specific goals and feeding into our wider pine marten recovery strategy.

We continue to monitor areas of last known occupancy for pine marten and chase up good quality sightings, but have yet to detect our target animal. We do, however, provide numerous records of other species, bird and mammal, particularly our other medium size carnivores: badger, otter, fox and polecat (small/medium!).

Polecat records are particularly useful as they feed directly into our national polecat census, organised by Lizzie. There has been a notable increase in animal activity with the warmer, more settled weather, particularly for badgers and polecat, the former of which will have cubs by now. Pine martens will not give birth until April/May, but will become increasingly active as the spring progresses.

This month will bring the den box/habitat enhancement phase of the work to a close, with the final tranche of boxes being installed in two sites around Llyn Brianne, and sites in the Dyfy Forest. One lucky camper reported a marten raiding her lunch box one morning whilst camping in the Dyfy Forest a couple of years ago – lucky lady (or unlucky, depending on how much you value a cheese sandwich!).

Photo: *A den box ready for installation overlooking Llyn Brianne*

Photo: *A polecat (top) and a pair of badgers caught on camera*

We had the pleasure of receiving legendary conservationist Roy Dennis at our HQ near Ledbury in March. He gave us some fantastic information on his reintroduction work with large raptors and red squirrels. It was particularly useful for us to learn of his experiences managing the social side of the work, and dealing with the inevitable conflict associated with re-establishing predatory animals.

I have written an article about our PPMW project for Natur Cymru, which was published last month, and is due to be re-published by the Daily Post. This was a satisfying achievement, as Natur Cymru has a solid core readership, who are actively engaged in conservation in Wales. I also presented our pine marten work in a talk at The Mammal Society's 60th anniversary conference in April, which will hopefully contribute to spreading word of our plans for the species' recovery outside Scotland, and promote useful discussion.

New MISE Project Officer

By Aline Denton, *Mammals in a Sustainable Environment (MISE) Project Officer*

My role with VWT began on 1st February as the MISE project Officer when Jenny moved into her new pine marten role. I had previously been a volunteer on the MISE project and enjoyed every minute, from hair tube monitoring for red squirrels, to harvest mice bait pots around Ceredigion (never have I been so excited to find droppings in a yoghurt pot, even if they have turned out to be mainly pygmy shrew!) and a wonderful weekend of otter and pine marten surveys in Waterford - with an occasional Guinness of course.

The first few weeks have been a whirlwind of meeting MISE colleagues in Ireland and Wales, VWT colleagues (performing a simulated Heimlich manoeuvre during first aid training is a good way to get to know someone!), and frantic background reading on the MISE species of interest. I've also been getting to know the mid Wales red squirrels, and the dedicated volunteers and partners involved in their conservation.

Photo: *MISE volunteers at the owl pellet workshop*

Another highlight has been an owl pellet workshop with MISE volunteers – a fascinating excursion into a world of small bones and detective work. We were keeping a close look-out for the harvest mouse jaw bone with its five-rooted tooth. Harvest mice records are scarce in Wales, so this could provide valuable information about their distribution. We didn't find any on this occasion, but did find a range of other small mammal remains including field and bank voles, house mice and common and pygmy shrew with their distinctive red-tipped teeth.

As each week passes with its variety of activities and new people, it continues to surprise me that I am being paid to do something so interesting and enjoyable! The MISE project runs until December, and the programme for the rest of the year includes a variety of mammal surveys across the counties of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, ranging from red squirrel trapping, to harvest mice bait pots, to polecat hair tubes. Volunteers have contributed a huge amount of time and effort to the project so far, and I look forward to working with the 'old hands' as well as new volunteers this year. If you are interested in coming along, please get in touch (alinedenton@vwt.org.uk).

May to October *(monthly)*	Check dormouse boxes at Cwm Clettwr, Ceredigion
April to September	Polecat hair tube trials, Ceredigion
July	Red squirrel trapping at Cwm Berwyn, Ceredigion
March to July *(fortnightly)*	Red squirrel hair tubes & camera traps at Rhandirmwyn, Carmarthenshire
July to September	Bait pot surveys for harvest mouse, Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire
September *(date tbc)*	Otter diet workshop *(2 days)*, Pembrokeshire
October to December	Harvest mice nest searches, Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire

The Irish Stoat Project

By Laura O'Flynn, *National University of Ireland Galway*

Laura O'Flynn from National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) outlines this collaborative project between the VWT and the Mammal Ecology Group at NUIG. This exciting PhD research project started in October and aims to provide crucial information on the ecology of this elusive mammal.

The Irish stoat is recognised as a near endemic subspecies (also found on the Isle of Man), quite distinct in both morphology and ecology from those found in Britain and further afield. It has been present in Ireland since before the last Ice age, and has been isolated on the island for a very long time, so we really can claim it as our own! The stoat in Ireland is protected under Irish (Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000) and international (Bern Convention, Appendix III) legislation, and is an important element of Irish biodiversity, yet we know so little about this native mammal. This is partly due to the difficulty in studying an elusive species which is challenging to handle. There is a particular lack of information on stoat ecology, and a real need for information on the habitat requirements and population dynamics of this important animal. There is no population estimate available for the species in Ireland, we truly have no idea how many there are!

This current project builds on a pilot study carried out by the VWT's Kate McAney in County Galway in 2010, where hair tubes were investigated as a means of detecting the presence of stoats in hedgerows. We will be using a variety of techniques to monitor stoats; including investigation into habitat usage, a distribution survey, genetic analysis and dietary analysis.

Photo: *Irish stoat © Dermot Breen*

Photo: *Irish stoat © Dermot Breen*

The construction of an all-island stoat distribution map is already underway, based on sightings reports. With the help of VWT's graphic designer, Helen Kidwell, we have produced both posters and questionnaires to highlight the Irish stoat project. As well as a general call for information from the public, we are also directly contacting key groups such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service conservation rangers, forestry workers and farmers. This distribution map is a 'living document', with amendments made as the project progresses and more information becomes available. The results are also being used to identify areas of investigation for later elements of the study.

Photo: *Irish stoat © Dermot Breen*

Stoat presence and habitat use will be investigated using three non-invasive methods (hair tubes, footprint track tubes and line transect searches for faeces). Records of stoats will be mapped using GIS to examine the habitat use and activity behaviour of the stoats. Besides providing essential information on an important native species, this project will examine the use of non-invasive techniques in studying mammals and will inform conservation genetics projects in general.

It's still early days for this research, but there has already been a fantastic response from the public so far. Exciting times lie ahead, and an opportunity to gain essential knowledge about one of Ireland's true natives. This project will give us a fascinating insight into how Irish stoats are interacting and using habitats, particularly in this changing landscape of ours.

There are a number of ways in which you can submit information to the project:

- Online Survey: **Irish Stoat Survey**
- Facebook: **Irish Stoat Project**
- Email: **irishstoatsurvey@gmail.com**
- Phone: **00353 91 492903**

(Laura O' Flynn, Mammal Ecology Group, NUI Galway)

Lesser horseshoe bats back in the news

By Kate McAney, *Mammal Development Manager (Ireland)*

You could be forgiven for thinking that our work in Ireland is mainly concerned with the Irish stoat and pine marten, based on my article in our last newsletter. But the focus of the Trust's work in Ireland has in fact been on the lesser horseshoe bat, the only member of the horseshoe family to occur in Ireland where it is confined to six western counties, Mayo, Galway, Clare, Limerick, Cork and Kerry.

As far back as 1994 we were surveying parts of the west of Ireland to locate roosts of this species in partnership with the rangers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, UK bat workers and additional VWT staff, and this extensive survey work continued up to the year 2004.

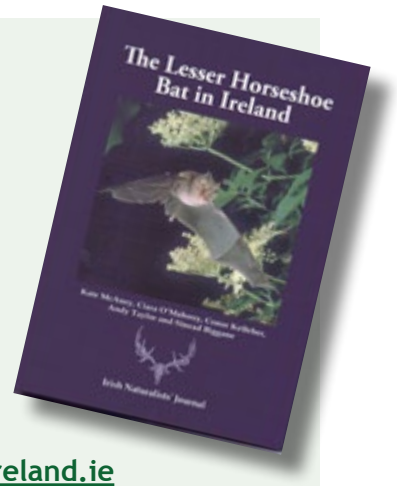
Two winter surveys took place in February 1994 and 1997 and eight surveys between the months of April to September during the years 1998 to 2004. 166 structures were searched during winter, ranging from natural cave sites to short mine systems, man-made subterranean passages known as souterrains that date back to 500-1000 AD, and cellars of derelict castles and mansions. The lesser horseshoe was the most common hibernating bat found, accounting for 96% (n = 757) of the bats discovered. In contrast to other countries, only 22 hibernating Myotid bats were found (Natterer's, whiskered/Brandt's, Daubenton's) and ten brown long-eareds.

A total of 3,276 structures were searched during the summer surveys, resulting in the discovery of 4,322 lesser horseshoe bats at 59 maternity sites. Although a labour-intensive exercise, these searches proved to be a very successful method for finding roosts of this species.

Photo: *Roosting lesser horseshoe bats in a cave © Frank Greenaway*

The details and results of the horseshoe bat surveys are now available as a special supplement to the Irish Naturalists' Journal that was published in October 2013.

Order from:
www.inj.biodiversityireland.ie



Almost all of the roosts were found in old, unoccupied buildings, with open doors and/or windows that served as access points. The majority of buildings were stone-built with natural slate roofs. We believe that many of the bats found roosting in small cottages or sheds may have relocated to these from larger, more suitable, sites no longer available.

These surveys also revealed that many of the people encountered showed an interest in the work being undertaken and in wildlife in general. Many of the farmers had participated in courses under the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme and had a good understanding of the wider conservations issues affecting land use. However, some people were suspicious of anyone conducting wildlife surveys and expressed resentment of European environmental legislation.

All the surveys highlighted the ongoing loss of existing important summer roosts through dereliction, renovation or demolition. However, on a positive note, seven maternity roosts re-surveyed or discovered have since become VWT reserves, one in Clare and six in Kerry, which in 2013 held a total of 1,598 bats.

The Impact of Street Lighting Project update

By James Baker, *Research Assistant (Impacts of Street Lighting Project)*

In association with: UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

The Impact of Street Lighting Project (ISLP) has completed the final hibernation surveys for greater horseshoe sites using SM2 detectors. All the main monitoring using the detectors has now been completed, providing a data set which has recorded activity at maternity and hibernation sites for lesser and greater horseshoe bats. Such is the extent of the data, that Wildlife Acoustics (the makers of the SM2) have asked us to provide them with as many of the horseshoe sonograms as possible to aid them in developing better recognisers for these species. At present we are having to manually identify all sonograms labelled by the recogniser program as a horseshoe bat, as well as all the sonograms which are identified as a bat but not to species.

The greater horseshoe summer sites have been manually identified by Julie Day (PhD student) with some interesting results which will need further analysis before we publish any results. Overall, we have recorded 450,810 bat files using 377 detectors over 2,165 nights for greater horseshoe maternity sites. Add to this the hibernation data and lesser horseshoe data collected in 2012/13 and we have nearly 2 million bat files. The VWT sites visited to aid in the study are Rock Farm, Brockley Hall & Iford Manor.

Julie and I attended a Lighting Symposium in London earlier this year and the project received a great deal of interest from other researchers after Dr Fiona Mathews (University of Exeter) presented an overview and some preliminary results from the project.

Photo: *Greater horseshoe bat roosting © Colin Morris*

Photo: *Lesser horseshoe bat roosting © Colin Morris*

From listening and talking to other researchers who are looking at the spectrum and intensity of artificial light sources, it is clear that intensities of less than 1 lux (less than moonlight levels) are affecting the behaviour of various organisms, including bats. The wavelength of the light (colour) also affects behaviour, with the added problem that different wavelengths affect different organisms in different ways. The take home message from the ecological research was that wildlife would benefit from us turning off the lights completely! While this is unlikely to happen, many measures to reduce artificial lighting can be put in place...

One of the sites we have been studying for the greater horseshoe maternity and hibernation is at Chudleigh in Devon. This is a growing town on the edge of the A38 surrounded by some very good foraging habitat for horseshoe bats. Several housing developments have occurred there over the last few decades which has reduced the ease at which the bats can commute to surrounding feeding areas. However, the latest ongoing housing development has some interesting differences.

The greater horseshoe bats and the flight corridor they use have been considered in the design and layout of the housing. Hedges have been planted some distance from the edge of the housing and a high wooden fence and further planting close to the edge of the houses to create a dark buffer. Most importantly there is no street lighting over the whole estate and the garages have been orientated such that car headlights do not spill out over the fields.

Photos: *Housing at Chudleigh, Devon, with no street lighting*

Photos: *High fence with tree and shrub planting on both sides close to housing. Approximately 100m beyond is a newly planted bank which will grow up creating a further buffer to light spill.*

This is a refreshing way to design housing estates. Considering that there is no legal requirement to illuminate roads, it is a shame that developers and lighting engineers almost always install lighting. Perhaps in the future it will be more common to design housing using reduced lighting levels.

This summer Julie and I will be studying the influence of artificial lighting closer to roosts by monitoring emergence and re-entry times. Julie will also be repeating the part night lighting study in Devon, where this year the switching off of street lighting has commenced at 17 sites with four control sites remaining switched on throughout the night.

The analysis of the huge data set continues. Julie will be running similar analysis of the eight greater horseshoe hibernation sites that we surveyed using 25 detector locations at each and I will undertake analysis of the lesser horseshoe sites we surveyed in 2012/13 for a Masters by Research project at the University of Exeter.

Spotlight on Pencelli Mill Reserve

By David Jermyn, *Reserves Officer - Wales & the Marches*

In the upper Usk Valley the Trust manages five important lesser horseshoe bat roosts. In 2013, they were home to over 1700 animals. One of these roosts is Pencelli Mill, a disused water mill located on a tributary of the River Usk (a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation).

Pencelli Mill possibly dates from the early-mid 1800s and was last operational in the late 1960s. A small maternity colony of lesser horseshoe bats (15 adults) was first discovered roosting in the building by the local bat group in the spring of 1990. At that time the 0.25ha site was owned by the local estate who in 1991 successfully gained planning permission to convert the old mill and agricultural land (orchard and mill pond) into a house with gardens.

At that time the presence of the bats in the mill was unknown. Fortunately for the bats the site was not developed within the five year time frame and the planning permission lapsed.

A second application was submitted in 1996 but by this time the mill was considered to be the second most important site in the National Park for this bat species, and was the fourth largest known maternity colony in the county. So, following written objections from the local bat group, the Trust and the Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales), the National Park planning committee decided to refuse the application to convert the property into a residential dwelling. To cut a long story short the Trust purchased the freehold of the site in 1997.

Photo: *Roosting lesser horseshoe bats at Pencelli Mill © Henry Schofield*

Photo: *Pencelli Mill 1997 taken by J. Messenger, prior to repair work.*

The mill pond (leat), is the grassed over depression on the right running towards the mill and the orchard can be seen on the left behind the sheds, which were later removed.

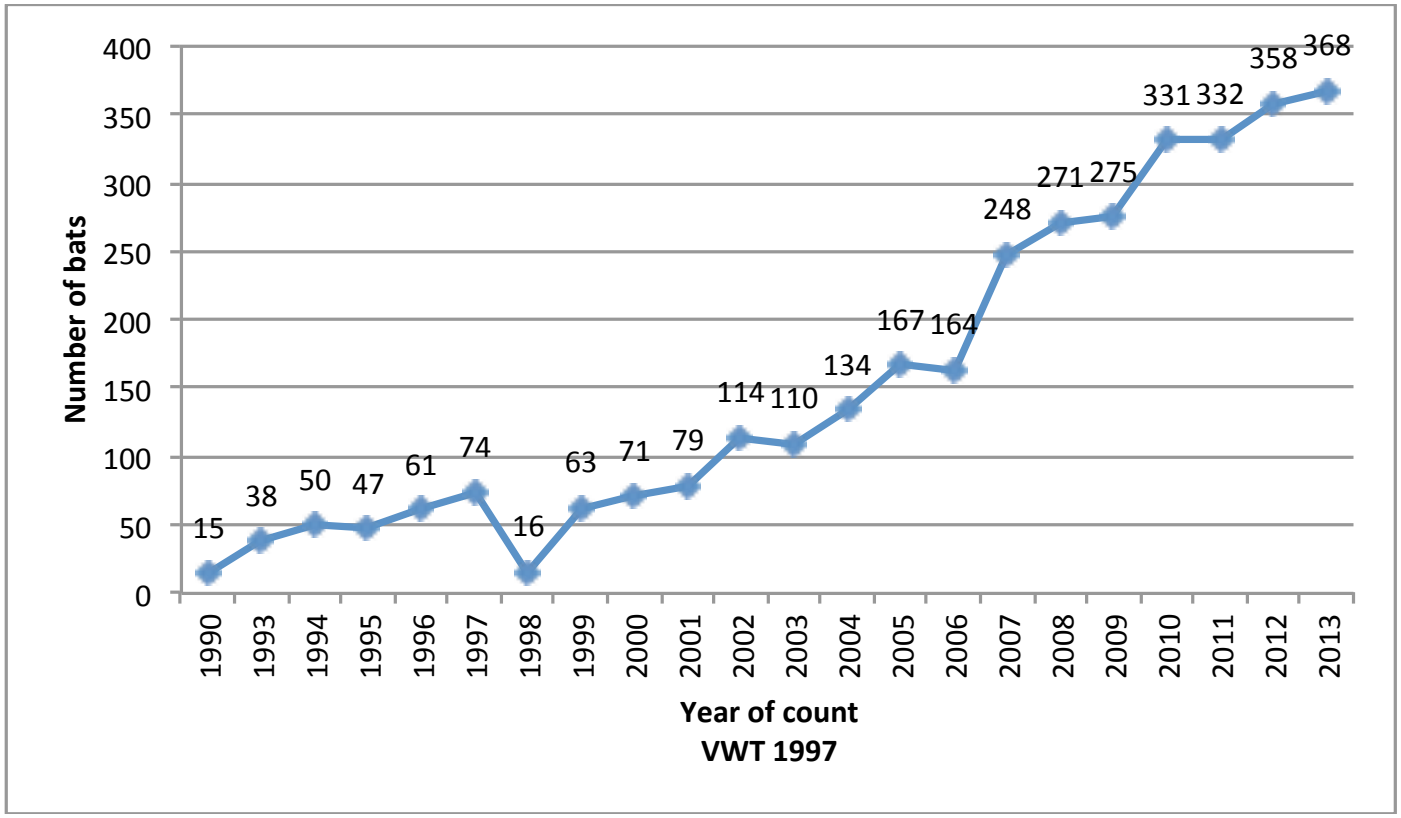
Over the winter of 1997/98, the following repair and enhancement works were undertaken: the stone gable wall was rebuilt, complete re-slating, partial re-flooring, repair of the dairy and pigsties, new external doors and new grilled bat exits, re-pointing, boundary fencing and a new access track was built. Despite the various improvements to the building, all the original mill gearing and water wheel have been kept in situ.

Photo: *The roost as it looks today.*

The peak summer emergence counts show how positively the lesser horseshoe bats have responded to the VWT's acquisition and enhancement of the old water mill. I understand the slight dip in the 1998 count was as a result of the provision of two new exit points (doorway and window at the rear) as opposed to the original exit on the right which was through the drive shaft housing of the water wheel which had to be blocked.

The other bat species recorded on and near the site are greater horseshoe, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's, Natterer's, noctule, whiskered/Brandt's and brown long-eared.

Some of the other animal species recorded on and near the site include otter, mink, heron, badger, river lamprey, bull head, dipper, kingfisher and numerous other bird species.



Graph: *Peak summer emergence counts of lesser horseshoe bats at Pencelli Mill Reserve*

Bats in Belgium

By Colin Morris, *Nature Reserves Manager*

Earlier this year, I was invited on a three-day visit to Belgium to help further improve my bat identification skills (I thought I was pretty good until I worked with the Belgians), particularly the difference between Brandt's (*Myotis brandtii*) and whiskered bats (*Myotis mystacinus*). It was also an opportunity to enhance my mist-net skills and work with species that are not recorded in the UK.

…in the evening of the first day we had arranged to work with a Belgium TV company who wanted to highlight the importance of bats in Belgium. It was planned that we would catch and fit a radio-tag to a Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*). It was part of Daan's research, so would not cause additional disturbance, and would add to their knowledge of where these rare bats were living and foraging. Two hours after having set up our mist nets things weren't looking too good. We had caught noctules, brown long-eared, Daubenton's, natterer's, common pipistrelle, and whiskered bats but no Bechstein's.

Part One of Colin's account of his trip to Belgium appeared in the October 2013 edition of this e-newsletter and can be read **here**.

Eventually, around 2300hrs a single female Bechstein's was captured, and work started on fitting a radio-tag. This was followed by chasing the bat on foot through woodland. Finally, Daan was filmed on a bicycle with an aerial attached to a broom handle that in turn was attached to the cross-bar, enabling it to be twisted round as he cycled - don't ask!

We finished around 0300 and went to bed; and so ended the first day…

On the second day (Wednesday) we drove back to the woodland where we'd mist-netted and radio-tracked the Bechstein's bat the night before. The bat was found roosting in a wood-pecker hole. We marked the tree so we would find it on our return that night to carry out an emergence count. In the meantime, we visited three other woodlands and surveyed some bat boxes. A nursery colony of brown long-eared bats, a small cluster of natterer's and a single Common pipistrelle were recorded.

Photo: *Daan working with the presenter and film crew showing the Bechstein's bat to members of the public*

That evening, as we settled below the woodpecker hole and waited, Rene arrived to help (he couldn't resist the lure of watching emerging Bechstein's bats). The first bat emerged just after dusk. Ten, twenty and thirty were soon passed…forty, fifty… still the bats continued to emerge. A total of 84 animals emerged: not only a very large roost, but also the first Bechstein's nursery site recorded in Flanders.

On the third day (Thursday) we were planning to survey the most important 'swarming site' in Belgium; the site was once an important limestone mine that is no longer being worked. In the morning we drove into Maastricht to collect Douwe and Yipp from the train station. This enthusiastic pair of volunteer bat workers live in Ter-Apel in north-east Holland. They'd travelled over 350km just for a nights' mist-netting (that's commitment). In the early afternoon we visited a greater mouse-eared (*Myotis myotis*) nursery site; the bats were using a brick tunnel under a railway line.

Photo: *The limestone mine entrance at Riemst - Belgium's most important swarming site*

Photo: *Noctule (Nyctalus noctula) © Colin Morris*

Photo: *Bechstein's nursery site*

In the evening, we drove to Riemst to prepare for the mist-netting. The two entrances to the mine were quite small and both had mist-nets erected near them. It wasn't long before the first bat was captured, a brown long-eared. Over the next three hours we extracted more than 150 animals of nine species. Bechstein's, Geoffroy's, Brandt's, whiskered, Daubenton's, brown long-eared, serotine, natterer's and the one species I really wanted to see 'in-the-hand' the pond bat (*Myotis dasycneme*). Finishing at around 0200 hours, it was only half-an-hours' drive back to our beds – an early night…

All-in-all it was a very special, exciting and rewarding trip. I got to work with some bat species I'd never seen before, I worked and made friends with some very interesting bat people, I visited some interesting places, obtained some varied mist-netting experiences, helped promote bat conservation in Belgium and promoted the work of The Vincent Wildlife Trust. An added bonus was being there when we discovered the largest Geoffroy's bats roost and the first Bechstein's nursery colony in Flanders. Not bad in just three days!

The Vincent Wildlife Trust

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