Oxfordshire Mammal Group

Noctule

Nyctalus noctula

Description: A large bat (body length 50-70mm), with a wingspan of 320-450mm. 18-40g. It has a post-calcarial lobe and a mushroom-shaped tragus. Chocolate-brown, long bat which looks segmented into three sections. Adult forearm length: 48-58mm.



Droppings: 11-15mm long, 3-3.5mm wide. Medium texture, blunt at either end. Often found below roost access points.

Flight description:
Emerges 5-10 mins after sunset, occasionally before sunset (often confused with swifts at height). Fast hawking (catching prey on the wing). Fast straight flight above trees in open habitats. Dives steeply

Lifespan: Normally 4-5 years.

Life cycle: During summer, females form maternity colony where they give birth to a single young. Maternity colonies often move location. Males usually roost singularly or in small bachelor groups. Mixed-sex colonies form in April to June. Young can fly at 4 weeks and forage for themselves at 6.

Roost locations: Trees, rarely buildings, sometimes walls and bridges. Loose crevice dweller. Most hibernation roosts are in trees or rock fissures, but have been found in bat boxes and buildings.

Habitats: Open habitats and rivers or lakes, near woodlands.

UK conservation status: Relatively widespread, but scarce in areas of intensive agriculture. **Oxfordshire:** Infrequent yet widespread.

Legislation:

- ♦ Habitat regulations 2010 Schedule 2
- ♦ Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5
- ♦ Section 41 NERC Act 2006

Echolocation:

Lowest frequency: 15 kHz Highest frequency: 52 kHz Peak intensity: 25 kHz

Average call duration: 0.021 seconds

Description: Slow irregular, very loud metallic chinks

or 'chop chop'.

Typical echolocation sonogram (from Brooks, A. *The Bats of Britain and Europe*).



