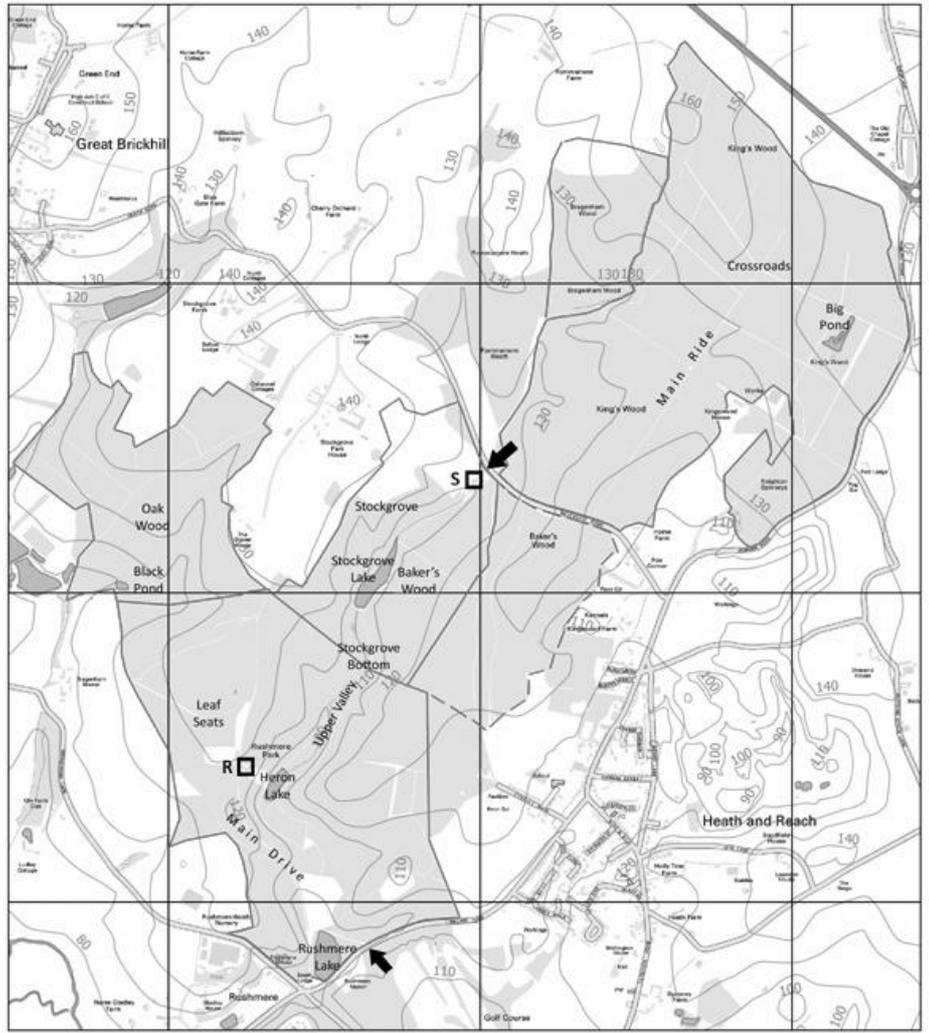


What did we find out from BatMap?

During the BatMap weekend, we trapped 143 bats of 9 species. This impressive total was the result of nearly 50 Bat Group members and invited experienced bat workers setting up harp traps in 19 locations and mist nets in 36 locations over the two nights. This provided us with a “snapshot” of bat distribution across a wide area which will form the basis of a report to Natural England, the Greensand Trust and the other landowners. 85 of the bats were caught in harp traps despite the fact that there were nearly twice as many nets as traps. This pattern seemed to apply across the species with the single exception of *Barbastelles*, which were all caught in nets. The Brown Long-Eared bats in King’s Wood have proved elusive on bat box surveys this year. Before BatMap, only eleven bats had new rings fitted during surveys (but there were 32 finds of bats previously ringed). During the BatMap weekend, new rings were fitted to 6 bats (with nine previously-ringed bats in the boxes). 31 bats were netted or trapped in King’s Wood during BatMap, of which 8 were already ringed and 13 had rings fitted. The remaining 10 bats, mostly juveniles, were caught in a brief frenzied period by one trapping group and had to be released without ringing to avoid holding them for an excessive time. The ringing will be important as we find the newly ringed bats in boxes in the future and can identify which group they belong to. Results so far confirm the pattern of three distinct groups of bats roosting in the wood. Two bats were caught outside the area they roost in, confirming that bats use a larger area of the wood for foraging than they use for roosting. Another development of the ringing project is the ringing of 11 bats using a new box in Baker’s Wood, which form a



fourth group not encountered in King’s Wood. A further three bats, probably of this group, were ringed during a trapping session at Stockgrove Lake after BatMap. On six evenings before BatMap, we carried out netting or trappings surveys to investigate possible trapping locations. Two of those areas were used during BatMap and the other four were not used, either because they showed little potential for getting new information (the northern corner of King’s Wood and beside Stockgrove Lake) or because they were too far from other locations (Baker’s Wood and the south-eastern corner of Rushmere). One location (in Baker’s Wood by the tip of Stockgrove Lake) was trapped after BatMap. All of these surveys caught 86 bats of 8 species (all of those caught during BatMap except for *Barbastelles*).

The main aims of BatMap were to

investigate the distribution of *Myotis* bats in Greater Stockgrove and to get further information about *Barbastelles*, especially in the Rushmere end of the area. An unexpected and early bonus was hearing two other species (*Nathusius’ pipistrelle* and a probable *Leisler’s Bat*) at Stockgrove early in the season, but *Myotis* and *Barbastelles* remained the main focus of our attention.

Of the *Myotis* bats, *Daubenton’s* were the species we knew most about. Perhaps surprisingly, we caught *Daubenton’s* only in the valley between Stockgrove Lake and Heron Lake, and around Black Pond, although we also saw some flying over Rushmere Lake before it dried out towards the end of summer. It seems that *Daubenton’s* confine themselves most to the water bodies, though they must also travel between them. *Natterer’s Bat* had

been something of a puzzle because we knew that they use King's Wood and parts of Rushmere, but apparently not Stockgrove in between. We now know that they do use Stockgrove (at least the Baker's Wood part), as well as the southern part of Oak Wood.

The most dramatic discoveries about the *Myotis* bats were about Brandt's Bat. We caught two at BatMap and four others during this season. It is clear that they use Baker's Wood, most of Rushmere and the southern part of Oak Wood as well as King's Wood. Radiotracking of the Brandt's caught during BatMap led us to the roost just outside Rushmere Country Park as well as showing us that these bats travel up through Rushmere, Oak Wood and Baker's Wood to King's Wood. Even better, we caught 6 whiskered bats (one at BatMap and five on other surveys). We are awaiting confirmation from DNA tests, but it looks as though Whiskered Bat is on both sides of the county boundary.



Breeding has clearly taken place, but where were the juveniles? It was also noticeable that all the Barbs caught at Rushmere were males while all except one at King's Wood were female. We must be careful not to read too much into the small number

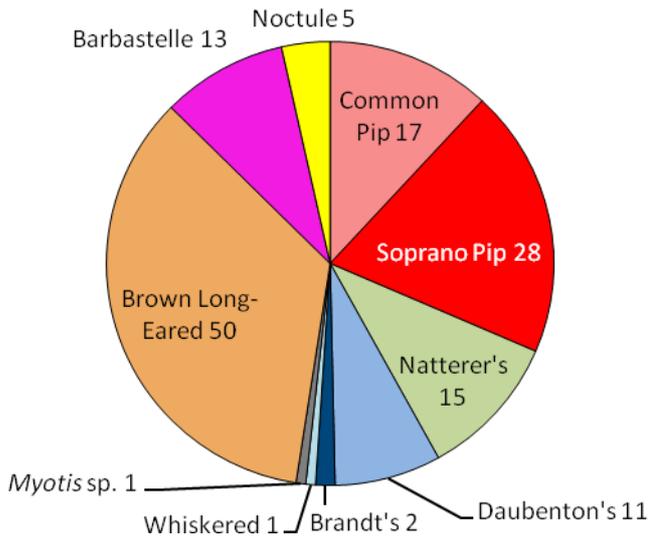
of bats caught (small from a statistical point of view - these differences could well be due to chance), but we may have indications of males foraging in different areas from females. BatMap has revealed new areas of bat interest. In Rushmere it had appeared that the main area of bat interest is the valley running down from Stockgrove

to the two lakes (Heron Lake and Rushmere Lake). We now know that the wet woodland in the southern part of Oak Wood is a centre of bat foraging activity. We knew that Brown Long-Eared Bats were roosting in the Rushmere Visitors' Centre, and it was good to have confirmation of 44 bats emerging during BatMap. Brown Long-Eareds were also found roosting in the sheds and a bat box near the Rushmere

entrance. The Visitors' Centre area has assumed more importance now we know that Brandt's forage around it and the sculpture trail area just north-west of it ("Leaf Seats") has plenty of bat activity, including Barbastelles, *Myotis* and Noctules. "Stockgrove Bottom" - the area between Stockgrove Lake and the top of the valley in Rushmere - has even more significance than we realised, with Daubenton's, Noctules, Brandt's and Barbastelles passing through. Finally, the little-disturbed south-eastern corner of Rushmere, the site of a house demolished in the 1940s has activity of a range of species including Brandt's. We now have much more understanding than we did of the bat use of the Greater Stockgrove area. This is a satisfying development of the work done in the early days of the Bat Group and it's of particular value as the National Nature Reserve in King's Wood is extended to include parts of Rushmere Country Park.

Thanks to everyone who helped in whatever way and made this event such a great success

Photo Geraldine Hogg



We caught 13 Barbastelles during BatMap (but none during other surveys, although we frequently heard them on bat detectors). They were caught in Kings Wood and in the southern part of the area but we know that they use Baker's Wood and the valley around Stockgrove and Heron Lakes. Seven of the Barbastelles were males and five of the six females were post-lactating.