

Serotines

On June 10th, 11 of us turned up at the serotine roost in the hope of seeing PhD student Caroline Moosey catch emerging bats to check their rings.

As always Audrey and Brian greeted us like old friends and we sat down to watch the show. The Position of the roost exit makes for tricky capture and they tried out a new design of net, which was hoped, would thwart their escapist tendencies.

Alas it was not to be and eight serotines eventually merged having ducked under the nets.

We got good views of chuckling serotines who added insult to injury by flying back to smirk at our efforts.

Bob and I were returning the captive Noctule to Martin and Tanya, so people had a good chance to watch her demolish some mealworms.

Not to be thwarted Caro worked on modifying the net and returned for another go on July 10th Viv Heys, Jonathan Durwood and Jude and Bob came to help. This time things went more smoothly. Caro managed to catch 6 of the 11 bats that emerged.

To our delight three of them were bats which Caro had ringed the previous season

Each bat had a small clipping of fur taken from its back and two wing punches for further analysis.

You might think that punching a small hole in the bats' wings would be painful, but they seemed totally unfazed by it, though some did initially grizzle a bit about being placed on their back so the sample could be taken. The fur samples will be used to analyse the bats' DNA. This will allow Caro to determine the relationship between individuals in a roost and to compare it to data elsewhere in the country and in Europe to see whether there are similarities between populations of serotine. This in turn will provide important information about bat migration

The wing punches will be analysed to gather information about the diet of the bat (sez she carefully avoiding showing herself up too much by going into detail)

Jonathan Durwood had a great time helping Caro record data and holds the bats in place for sampling. Viv got a chance to try out her new very pink Noctule gloves and has taken some video footage of the procedure.

It is unlikely that Caro will return to ring more but

one of the serotines shows of her new ring. Held by Jonathan wearing some very natty deep blue gloves. In a stunning display of sexual dimorphism, Viv had a pair of livid pink gloves. Photo Bob Cornes

You can see both of these in colour on the newsgroup photo album as well as more shots of the processing of the bats



Jonathan Durwood helping Caro



The bat group will continue to monitor the roost and make a record of any bats which are caught that carry a ring.

One of the side effects of Caro's research is that it has been discovered that some quite large roosts which had been identified as serotine roosts are nothing of the sort and in a number of instances it has been found that they are sharing roosts with species such as Noctules.

Finding serotines the lazy way

We reported in the last issue that we had picked up serotine calls in the Maulden- Amptill area, but the wretches proved very elusive. Then we had a call from telling us that the large bats had returned to her field. Bob and Jude headed off on the first free evening they had, which unfortunately was a cold and windy one and not a single bat showed up – not even a pip. Two nights later we had another phone call. The bats were back. Had a Magenta 4 detector and as she talked to Bb he could hear the unmistakable rhythm of serotines in the background. A confirmed record without leaving the comfort of his arm chair