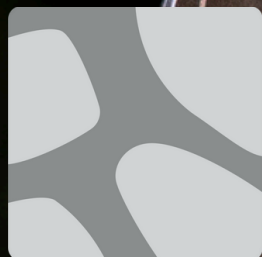




Mendip Hills
National
Landscape



Champion Species Fact Sheet

Greater Horseshoe Bat
Rhinolophus ferrumequinum



mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/nature-recovery-plan

Why a Champion Species?

- UK population has decreased by as much as 98% in the last 100 years.
- UK and European Protected Species and S41 Threatened Species.
- The Mendip Hills are recognised as critically important to the species, hence the internationally important 'North Somerset and Mendip Bats Special Area of Conservation' designation.

Preferred habitat

- Cave dwelling.
- Barns in summer.
- Use of hedgerows and dry stone walls for navigation and grazed grasslands for foraging.



Best time to see

- Hibernate in caves from late autumn, emerging in April, depending on weather.
- They can travel as far as 50km from their hibernation sites to their summer feeding roosts, which is the best time to see them out feeding after dusk.

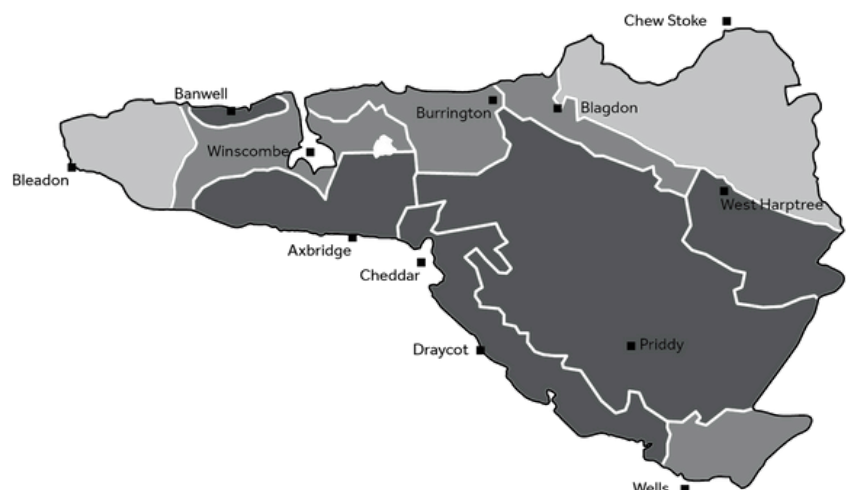
Points of interest

- Females often aggregate in large numbers to give birth, often in farm buildings such as barns, joining what is known as a maternity roost.
- They hang, pendulously (not holding on to a surface like other bat species), upside-down, which assists them in taking off.
- Very distinctive calls, different from other bat species - horseshoe bats 'hum' their calls, which is amplified and projected by their amazing horseshoe shaped nose!
- One of the largest bat species found in the UK with a wingspan of up to 40cm.

Key threats

- Loss of feeding and maternity roost spaces due to farm building development or old barn abandonment and collapse.
- Disturbance in cave systems whilst hibernating or roosting from recreational caving.
- Foraging habitat and prey species loss. Bats require hedges, woodland edges, and dry stone walls to navigate the landscape and find food.
- They require large insects and pesticide sprays, silaging, and worming practices have drastically impacted prey species and therefore the bat population.

Where to find them



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