

# The Applecross Trust



## Fact Sheet 11

### Pipistrelle Bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)

The pipistrelle is the smallest and the most common of Britain's 14 species of bat and it is frequently seen in Applecross, particularly in the half an hour prior to sunset. Another bat species found here is the Daubenton's bat, which feeds over freshwater and has been recorded along the Riverside Walk near the Home Bridge.

The pipistrelle has a tiny body with short legs, a broad flat head with short broad ears, quite narrow wings and a short tail. Adults vary in colour, some colonies are mainly orange-brown and others mainly pale grey-brown.

The bats gather together in colonies throughout the year. Favourite summer roosting spots are small, warm spaces, often behind tiles on a south-facing roof. In the summer months the female pipistrelles will form their own nursery colonies and the males will roost in separate small colonies, only joining the females during the autumn and winter months. Female bats usually give birth to one baby in June, warmth is very important to the new born, the warmer they are the more energy can be directed at growth. The young are weaned and ready to fly independently at three weeks old.

Pipistrelles hunt over a regular area, often eating several hundred insects a day, as well as the troublesome midge! They use a system of echo-location to avoid bumping into obstacles and to track down prey. Bats hibernate during the winter, the colony often choosing a quiet place in a house roof, a hollow tree or a rock crevice. Winter colonies sometimes number 1000 bats.

The main threats to bats are pesticides, which both reduce their food supply directly and put poisons into the food chain and habitat loss.

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