



## **Bats - These are some of the bats you are likely to encounter.**

**Noctules** are the biggest bats in Britain. They have long, narrow wings, and a high and straight flightpath.

**Daubenton's bats** are medium-sized bats with a white underside. They often fly over water like tiny hovercrafts. They have big feet to scoop insects from the surface.

The **pipistrelle** is Britain's smallest species of bat, weighing the same as just 10 paperclips. They look much bigger in flight and have a very erratic flightpath. They are the commonest bat seen in gardens and the most likely to use bat boxes.

## **There are some important things to remember when making and siting bat boxes.**

Only use untreated wood tanalised wood is not suitable. Do not use any wood preservatives or paints. Bats are sensitive to smells and some chemicals are harmful to bats.

Fixing your bat box with nails may damage the tree so ask the tree owner to attach the box with wire around the trunk or branch. Use a piece of hose or section of car tyre over the wire to prevent damage to the tree. Remember that trees grow, so any fixings should be checked every year.

Place your bat boxes as high up as you can so they are safe from cats. It is best to put them on trees but you can use the sides of buildings. Three boxes per tree are ideal, facing north, south-east and south-west. Boxes facing in different directions may be used at different times of the year and in varying conditions. Make sure there are no branches around the box bats like an uncluttered flightpath to and from the box.

It is useful to site boxes in places where bats are known to feed but have no nearby roosts. Good sites are near rivers, ponds, woodland glades and sheltered hedgerows. The sides of woodland rides are good places, as are trees that are a little isolated. These trees are easy to spot in urban areas such as parks, schools and hospital grounds. Don't forget to contact your local bat group to let them know what you are doing. They will be able to offer help and advice.

Never disturb your bat boxes it is illegal to disturb bats and it is also cruel. The best way to see if the boxes are being used is to look for small, dry, crumbly droppings below the box or for the bats themselves leaving the boxes as night falls. If you find bats in the box, only a licensed bat warden is allowed to inspect it in the future.

Dont worry if you think your bat boxes are not being used immediately. Bats leave little trace and are rarely seen as they move about a lot so they may well be using the box. If you find treecreepers, blue, coal or great tits nesting in your bat box, check the size of your entrance slit it is probably too big.

**If you find a sick or ailing bat, you should not approach or handle the animal but seek advice from the Bat Conservation Trust.**

Source: *RSPB Make a bat box wildlife information leaflet (2002)*

**How to Build a Bat Box - Courtesy of GTES @ [www.greentracks.co.uk](http://www.greentracks.co.uk)**

