DESCRIPTION AND STATUS

This is a medium sized bat (by British standards) with a wingspan of 24-28cm. It has incredibly long ears, hence its name. They shelter /roost in trees and in buildings, usually older buildings with large roof voids. A typical Brown long-eared roost would be a baronial home, Victorian stable block or church, in parkland or wooded setting. Females give birth to one baby, once per year. They are not designed for long distance flight so need good feeding habitat (i.e. an insect rich combination or water and woodland) close to their maternity roost. A typical maternity roost in Scotland may have around 40 mother bats. For hibernation males and females seek cool humid places (e.g. caves, mines, cellars). They are faithful to roost sites and will return to the same places year after year.

This bat occurs throughout mainland Scotland (and Britain). It is described as widespread and common. However this description may encourage a false sense of complacency about its conservation status.

It is a European Protected species, UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species and is listed on the Scottish Biodiversity List.

DISTRIBUTION MAP

Key to map
Green spots = summer/winter roosts
Yellow spots = bats away from roosts
Map source – BCT bat atlas 2000

THREATS

- A general lack of awareness of bats often made worse by negative PR
- Loss of roosts, due to conversion and or renovation of older properties without retaining access for bats. (If a bat loses access to its baronial home its unlikely to find another in its home territory)
- Fragmentation and loss of habitat

ACTION REQUIRED

1. Better PR for bats and more survey in Scotland
2. Encourage the use of bat access slates to retain / create access for this species into roof spaces
3. Safeguard / enhance habitat which is rich in insect life (and therefore attractive to bats and people)

FURTHER READING

Bat Conservation Trust website – Brown long-eared bat (Bat detector sounds, Fact sheets, maps, info on volunteer surveys etc.)

MSP SPECIES CHAMPION

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