**DESCRIPTION**

This is the second smallest of the British bats with a wingspan of 20 – 23cm. With its wings folded it is small enough to fit inside a matchbox. It’s one of the bats the public is most likely to encounter, because it emerges close to sunset and often lives in houses. It usually makes an easy houseguest, squeezing unnoticed between sarking boards and tiles/slates) or under soffits. People may have these bats for many years and be quite unaware of their presence, only discovering them if brought in by cats or when learner fliers accidentally come into the house.

The females need very warm sites for maternity roosts e.g. under the slates of a south facing roof. In winter both males and females seek cool humid sites for hibernation. They are faithful to roost sites and will return to the same places year after year.

These tiny bats are the only species known to breed as far north as Orkney, where they occur in very low numbers. They feed on small insects and can consume thousands of midges a night.

**What’s in a name?**

The use of “common” to describe this bat is misleading, while it is the most abundant of the Pipistrelles in England this is not the case in Scotland where it is widespread but encountered far less often than the soprano pipistrelle.

**Status**

It is a European Protected species.

**DISTRIBUTION MAP**

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**THREATS**

1. A general lack of awareness of bats often made worse by negative PR
2. Loss of roosts, due to conversion and or renovation of properties without retaining access for bats.
3. Fragmentation and loss of habitat

**ACTION REQUIRED**

1. Better PR for bats and more survey in Scotland
2. Encourage the use of bat boxes built into cavity walls to create roost sites
3. Safeguard / enhance habitat which is rich in insect life (and therefore attractive to bats and people)

**FURTHER READING/LISTENING**

Bat Conservation Trust website – [Common pipistrelle bat](http://www.bats.org.uk)

**MSP SPECIES CHAMPION**

**Bill Kidd MSP**

Member for: Glasgow Anniesland
Region: Glasgow
Party: Scottish National Party

Bat Conservation Trust
[www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)