



Serotine bat

Cnephaeus serotinus

Snapshot: one of Britain's largest bats; uncommon species associated with pasture and buildings; emerges early evening; leisurely flapping flight at tree top height.



Serotine bat © Kevin Simmonds / Aurum Ecology



Grazed Breckland heath - typical habitat for Serotines © Arthur Rivett

How to identify a Serotine bat

- **Echolocation:** peak at 25-30kHz. Sounds like irregular hand-clapping.
- **Size:** Large, head & body length 58 - 80 mm
- **Flight pattern:** Leisurely, highly manoeuvrable flapping flight with distinctive occasional short glides or steep descents. Flies at tree-top height.
- **Distinctive features**
Large, distinctive, rugby-ball shaped droppings
Large ears
- **Colour:** Dark brown fur above, pale underneath, face and ears black.

Habitat and requirements

- Pastures and grazed Breckland heath provides habitat for chafers and dung beetles, prey for Serotines.
- Building orientated species, rarely found in trees.
- Sometimes share buildings with Pipistrelles, Long-eared bats. Natterer's, Whiskered and Noctule bats.
- **Roost sites:** usually in older buildings with high gables and cavity walls and churches. In crevices around chimneys, cavity walls, between felt or boarding, under tiles or floors and along ridge.
- **Hibernation sites:** inside cavity walls and disused chimneys.

Threats

- Loss of feeding habitats in pastures e.g. through reductions in dairy farming.
- Changing agricultural practices reducing populations of beetles causing food shortages for bats.
- Direct disturbance or destruction of maternity roosts.
- Toxic chemicals used in timber treatments in domestic roof spaces causing mortality.

Conservation

Considered Least Concern England

Protected under UK and European law

Relevant legislation:

Bonn Convention

Bern Convention

Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

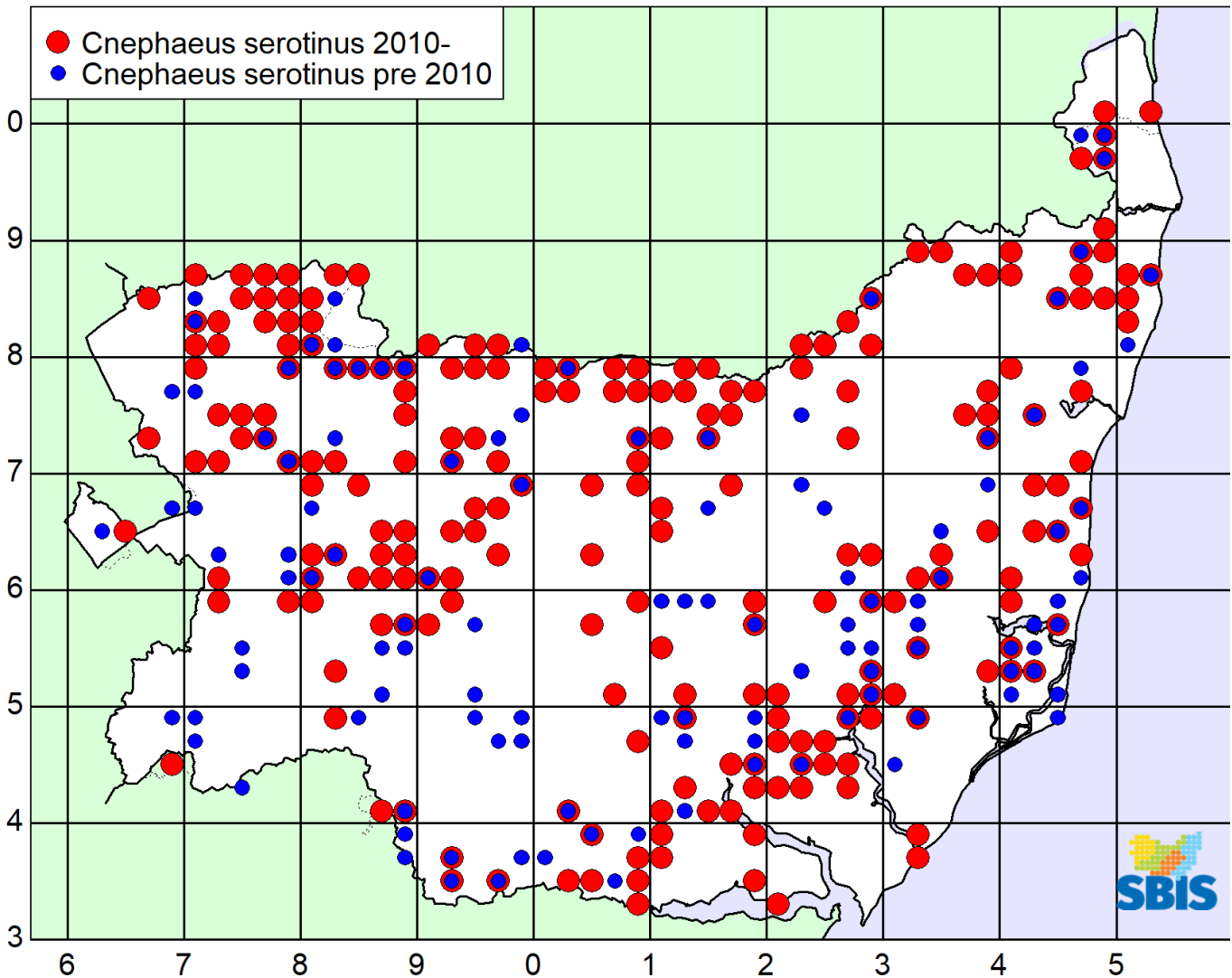
s41 Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 list of Priority species

Serotine bats in Suffolk

Suffolk is the northern breeding limit for Serotines with few records north of a line between the River Severn and the Wash. In 1985, only one colony of the species was known to exist in the county. Since then the species has been found to be widespread, but in small colonies. There are now 45 known colonies, discovered by members of Suffolk Bat

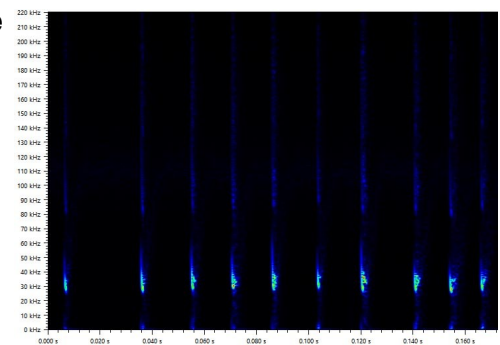
Group and by Robert Stebbings and Mark Robinson in their survey of Serotines on the Suffolk/Cambridgeshire border. By 2012 these bats were known from 136 locations and a further 99 locations added by the end of 2016.

The distribution map (SBIS, dated May 2020) shows current records from 2010 to date (red) and the pre 2010 records (blue).



Further information

- **Bat Conservation Trust: Fact sheet, photos and listen to Serotine bat echolocation**
<https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/what-are-bats/uk-bats>
- **The Wildlife Trusts Fact Sheet**
<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/mammals/serotine>
- **Distribution Atlas for Bats in Suffolk 1983-2016**, published by Suffolk Bat Group, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service and Suffolk Wildlife Trust 2017. Available to download at <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/suffolkbatgroup> or <https://www.suffolkbis.org.uk/bats>
- **Suffolk Bat Group** <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/suffolkbatgroup>
- **National Bat Helpline:** 0345 1300 228



Serotine bat echolocation call (sonogram)