

# BATS & "The Millennium Link"

## NEWSLETTER



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## Here we go Again !

..... Newsletter No 3 and we hope it gets you all thinking that Summer is well on the way, and with it, **lots** of bat activity. We already started this years surveys back in February in conjunction with a study being carried out by Kirsty Gourlay (Final Year Student at Napier University) looking into bat behaviour on the canals from Winter through to early Summer. The good news is that at time of writing (early April) we already have lots of activity. Our first Daubenton's appeared on the Union Canal on 18th March, whilst Soprano pipistrelle's had already been around for a couple of weeks prior. On the other hand Bandit pipistrelle has yet to be recorded this year.



Jellyhill, Forth & Clyde Canal

### Annual Report 2001

This years report is now available, but unfortunately due to production costs cannot be sent out to everyone. If you would like to receive a copy please send the editor a cheque for £5.00, payable to "**BATS & The Millennium Link**"

### BaTML 2002 Objectives

This year promises to be very busy, not only will we continue with our standard surveys at 18 sites (14 from last year plus 4 new ones) but in addition we will be involved with Insect/Diet Research (Craig Macadam) and Habitat Surveys (Kirsty Morrison). Add to this our plans to try and find some roosts in June/July and we are sure to be very busy.

### Sunrise Surveys

During June/July we will be getting up very early in the morning (3.30am..... probably not worth going to bed actually) to search for bat roosts. If you are interested in getting involved please contact the editor

### What's Happening.....

- **42 Surveys at 19 Sites** completed so far, collating some 126 hours of data.
- **Winter/Spring Survey Programme** carried out on 4 sites at the East side of Union Canal.
- **Public Bat Evening to be in August**, Details to be confirmed.
- **Annual Report 2001** Detailed report made available to project funders.
- **Presentations made to SWT West Lothian and West Of Scotland Bat Groups.**
- **Insect and Habitat Surveys** - scheduled for April & May.

## Survey Sites 2002

The following sites are due to be surveyed this year, if you assisted last year on any of these we will be getting in touch and asking once again for your help. If you were not involved and would like to be, please contact the editor.

**Forth & Clyde Canal** – Auchinstarry (I H R), Carmuir, Jellyhill, Kirkintilloch West, Possil Loch, Tintock,

**Union Canal** – Avontoun, A801, Causewayend, Fawnspark (I H R W), Falkirk Tunnel, Gogar Moor (W), Harrison Park, Learielaw, Purliehill, Slateford (W), Wilkies Basin, Winchburgh North (R W)

All are standard surveys but where shown the following may also apply :-

(I) Insect Survey, (H) Habitat Survey, (R) Roost Search, (W) Winter



- **Get involved....** It's easy, just phone the editor. No experience necessary.
- **Newsletter No 4** – due out in October 2002.

**BATS & "The Millennium Link"** is supported by the following organisations :-

SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

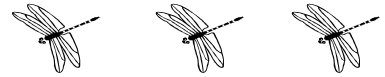
British Waterways

FALKIRK ENVIRONMENT TRUST

Clyde Bat Group

Central Scotland Bat Group

# The Diet Of Daubenton's Bats on The Millennium Link



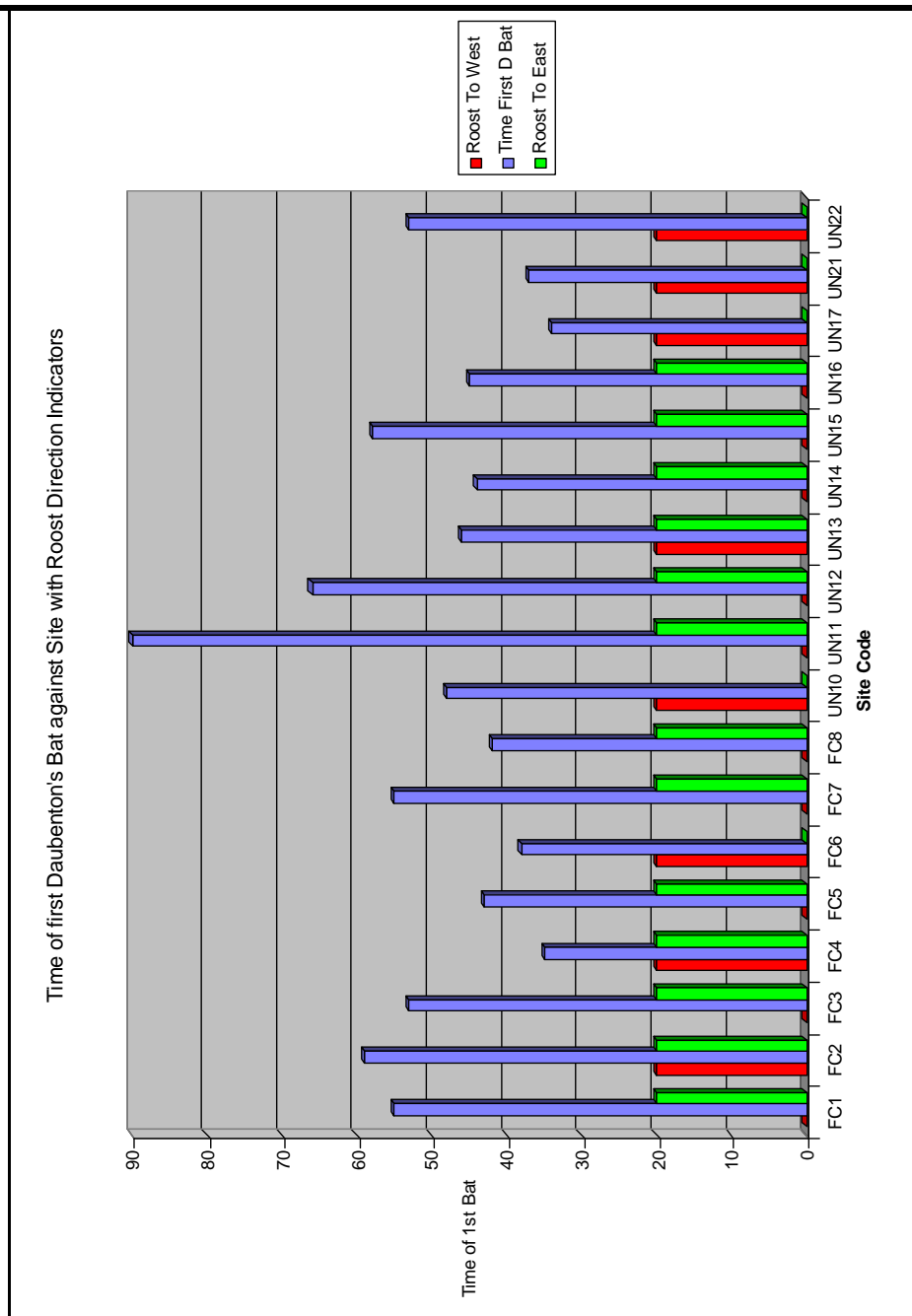
The first phase of the project to investigate the diet of Daubenton's bats along The Millennium Link has begun. Aquatic invertebrate surveys have been undertaken at Fawnsparck (UN16) on the Union Canal and Auchinstarry (FC6) on the Forth & Clyde Canal. Surveys consisted of a systematic search of the marginal vegetation at each site, followed by a scoop of the sediment on the canal bed. The initial survey results show that the canal holds a healthy population of aquatic invertebrates, however the majority of the specimens collected live solely within the water and would therefore not be available to foraging bats.

Aquatic insects, the potential prey of bats, were most common at Auchinstarry where 8 separate families of insect were recorded. The most common were the non-biting midges (Chironomidae). These small insects are well known prey items of many species of bat and it was expected that they would make up the majority of specimens found. In addition to the Chironomidae we also found alderflies, caddisflies, damselflies, aquatic beetles, pond skaters and backswimmers. At Fawnsparck we found alderflies, caddisflies, non-biting midges, damselflies, water crickets and lesser water boatmen.

The samples collected will now be identified to species level and as such this will allow flight periods, adult sizes and hence the potential for any of these species to be a prey item for bats to be determined. Future work will include: the collection of insects during periods when bats are actively foraging, the analysis of bat droppings and further aquatic invertebrate surveys.

Craig Macadam FLS, Amateur Entomologists' Society

We have collected lots of data so far, some of which we shared with you in our last newsletter. The graph below shows the time of the first bat recorded relative to minutes after sunset and the probable direction where roost is located.



## Site Code Key:-

- FC1 - Netherton
- FC2 - Possil Loch
- FC3 - Jellyhill
- FC4 - Kirkintilloch
- FC5 - Tintock
- FC6 - Auchinstarry
- FC7 - Kelvinhead
- FC8 - Underwood E
- FC9 - Carmuir
- UN10- Falkirk Tunnel
- UN11 - Purliehill
- UN12 - A801
- UN13 - Causewayend
- UN14 - Avontoun
- UN15 - Wilcoxholm
- UN16 - Fawnsparck
- UN17 - Winchburgh
- UN18 - Learielaw
- UN19 - Wilkies Basin
- UN20 - Gogar Moor
- UN21 - Slateford
- UN22 - Harrison Park

(RED - data not shown)

## DATA PROTECTION ACT

Please note, if you are the direct recipient of this newsletter, then your name, address and other contact details are being retained on our database for use solely in connection with **BaTML**.

If you do not wish to be kept informed about our activities, please advise us accordingly and we will arrange for your details to be removed.