

Soprano Pipistrelle

Pipistrellus pygmaeus

Mammal · Active Apr-Oct · hibernates in winter



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A tiny bat, all but indistinguishable from the common pipistrelle in the hand, with dark reddish-brown fur and a blackish face. The two were only recognised as separate species in the 1990s, when researchers noticed that pipistrelles echolocated at two distinct frequencies: the soprano calls at around 55 kHz, the common at 45. Soprano pipistrelles favour riparian habitat, so the Nith and its wooded corridors suit them.

BEHAVIOUR

Soprano pipistrelles emerge shortly after sunset and hunt small flies over water, along treelines and around lit areas, taking thousands of insects in a night in fast, jerky, twisting flight. Maternity roosts, in buildings, can be very large — sometimes over a thousand females. They hibernate from around November in crevices, trees and buildings, waking in mild spells to drink.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Vesper bats (Vespertilionidae)
SIZE	Wingspan 19–23 cm · echolocates at around 55 kHz
UK STATUS	Protected under UK and European law

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