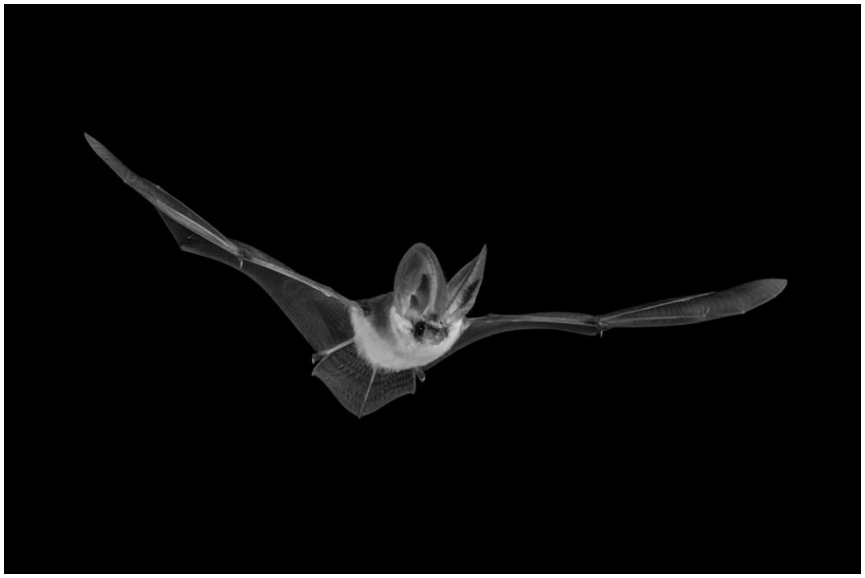
# Back from the Brink – Species summary

## *Grey Long-eared Bat*

**BftB project:** SP03 – Grey Long-eared Bat Species Recovery Project

**Project lead organisation:** Bat Conservation Trust

**Contact:** enquiries@bats.org.uk

| | |
|---|---|
| **Species name – common & scientific** | Grey long-eared bat (*Plecotus austriacus)* |
| **Photograph** |  <br>*© Neil Aldridge / Back from the Brink* |
| **Taxon group** | Chiroptera |
| **Conservation status** | Near threatened and nationally rare |
| **UK distribution** | Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Sussex |
| **Habitat associations** | Unimproved grassland, riparian vegetation, broadleaved woodland, hedgerows |
| **BftB work carried out:** | |
| **Survey & Monitoring** | Monitoring carried out at 7 roost sites (5 registered with NBMP, 2 requested) by project end (2021). Bat activity surveys carried out over 2 years at 2 habitat restoration sites (2018/19, 2019/20). |
| **Sites habitat management works** | 80ha of grassland restoration and/or management changes carried out throughout the project area over 30 sites. |
| **Technical advice provision** | Species information and habitat requirements provided to over 200 landowners and land managers as well as bespoke advice for grassland restoration sites and for Countryside Stewardship applications. This guidance is now available on the BCT website.<br>Species identification guide developed and provided to local authorities and ecological consultants – also available on the website. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Links made with other taxa / conservation work?** | Links made with RSPB work on Cirl buntings in the area, as well as linked up advice and landowner engagement with the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project. Also working with National Trust and RSPB on habitat restoration. |
| **Wider engagement & advocacy activities?** | • 60+ community engagement events<br>• 80+ volunteers trained/engaged<br>• Schools pack on GLEB and grassland restoration |
| **BftB results obtained:** | |
| **Recorded Distribution** (in BftB focal areas) | 7 main roosts plus numerous low numbers/single records throughout the project area and beyond. |
| **Recorded Abundance of species populations** | Abundance cannot be effectively counted with current datasets. Most roosts show very low numbers (1-6) with little historical comparison. More established roost records seem to show historical fluctuations but currently in decline. |
| **Species Recovery Curve progress made** | Step 5, pressures (habitat loss and fragmentation) and remedial action (habitat restoration) have been identified. Other drivers of decline are not addressed by this project. Step 6 (recovery solutions trialled) are being carried out within the project area (grassland restoration). (Extract from final report). |
| **Recommendations for future work:-** | • Continued grassland restoration and landowner engagement to the levels set out for FCS<br>• Integration of grassland restoration for target species (GLE) into ELMS<br>• Continued and expanded monitoring of GLE roosts<br>• Continued work with local authorities, planners and ecological consultants to ensure GLE needs are met<br>• Data analysis and continued/long term monitoring of habitat restoration sites |