



BATS IN THE PARK

If you're in the park at dusk during the warmer months, you may be lucky enough to glimpse a dark shape fluttering above your head and through the trees— the bats of Wandsworth Park!

Bats play an important role; they eat insects so are important in controlling invertebrate populations, and they also assist with pollination—like bees! In the UK, bats are an 'indicator species', meaning changes to bat populations can tell us about wider changes to the environment. For example, bats might suffer when there are problems with insect populations, or when habitats are destroyed or poorly managed—for example when construction to loft spaces remove bat roosts.

In Wandsworth Park, bat surveys have shown us that there are at least 3 different species of bats that share the park with us. These are soprano, common pipistrelle and a third currently unknown species—although we do know it belongs to the Myotis family of bats. There are also records of a further four species, within 500m of the park. These bats are also likely to be using the park, and the river foreshore for foraging, commuting and social activity.

What makes Wandsworth Park such a good home for bats?



The darkness! This is the only area of the Thames where it is dark on both sides of the river, until Seething Wells in Kingston in the West, and Rainham Marshes in the East. This is particularly important for Myotis species that have reduced tolerance of lighting and are suffering from population decline in London due to the increasing light pollution.



Avenues of mature trees! These avenues of trees are used as commuting routes allowing bats to move through and around the park, whilst avoiding predators.



Food! The trees are an insect breeding habitat and offer a sheltered microclimate. This means that insects are available for longer in the day, and in the season.

Interested in finding out more?

Friends of Wandsworth Park run bat walks in the spring and summer with bat detectors which allow us to "hear" the bats. Look out for notices early in the new year.



Taken from an article by Valerie Selby, Biodiversity Manager, Wandsworth Council