

The Cotswold Water Park Bat Initiative: A midsummer update!

Work on the Bat Initiative has continued in a frenzy of activity during the spring and summer as many teams of volunteers have been out doing surveys and checking bridges (for Daubentons Bat roosts) throughout the CWP. Since the last update, a further 40 bat boxes have been erected on reserves in the area. We've even done a little mist netting (under licence of course!). Its safe to say, that with the tremendous efforts of a large number of volunteers, that the project is progressing very nicely.

Furthermore, on the weekend, whilst doing some routine checks of some recently erected bat boxes, something really quite unexpected was found. A male Bechsteins Bat (in breeding condition) was found roosting in a box erected only weeks earlier! As far as we are aware, this may be the first record of this species within the CWP, and is certainly the first record since the launch of the project! Some further work is needed here to establish the extent of this population.

Initial results of the Cotswold Water Park-wide surveys have already shown that the CWP supports high levels of bat activity of a diverse range of species, suggesting regional and perhaps nationally importance. This recent finding only serves to further raise the nature conservation importance of the CWP. It also serves as a timely reminder of the value of bat box monitoring schemes!

With huge thanks for all of the efforts of the many volunteers from both Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, especially Will Ponting, Jenny Ford and Eric Palmer for coordinating all of these activities and surveys.

For further information on this project, please contact Gareth Harris, Biodiversity Officer, Cotswold Water Park Society on 01285 861459 or email gareth.harris@waterpark.org