

Report under The Conservation of Habitats and
Species Regulations 2017 (as amended),
Regulation 9A

2019-2024

Conservation status assessment for the species:

S1323 - Bechstein's bat

(Myotis bechsteinii)

England



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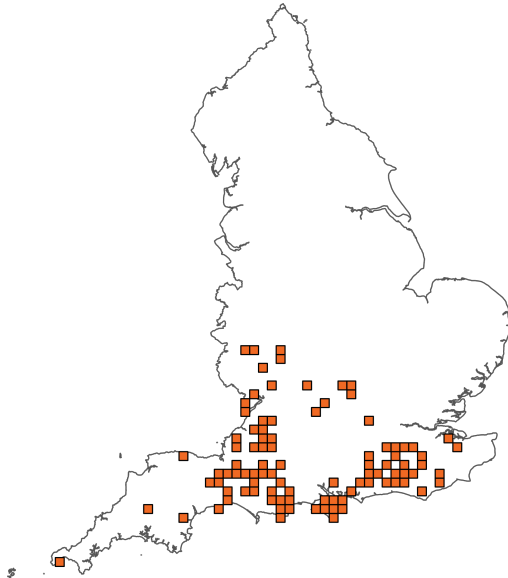
Important note - Please read

- The information in this document represents the England Report under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Regulation 9A, for the period 2019-2024.
- It is based on supporting information provided by Natural England, which is documented separately.
- The Habitats Regulations reporting 2019-2024 Approach Document provides details on how this supporting information contributed to the UK Report and the fields that were completed for each parameter.
- Maps showing the distribution and range of the species are included.
- Explanatory notes (where provided) are included at the end. These provide additional audit trail information to that included within the assessments. Further underpinning explanatory notes are available in the related country reports.
- Some of the reporting fields have been left blank because either: (i) there was insufficient information to complete the field; (ii) completion of the field was not obligatory; and/or (iii) the field was not relevant to this species (section 12 National Site Network coverage for Annex II species).

Further details on the approach to the Habitats Regulations Reporting 2019-2024 are available on the [JNCC website](#).

Assessment Summary: Bechstein's bat

Distribution Map



Range Map

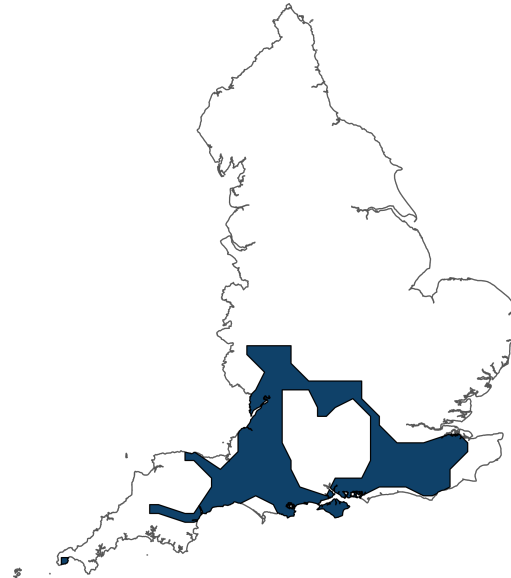


Figure 1: England distribution and range map for S1323 - Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*). Coastline boundary derived from the Oil and Gas Authority's OGA and Lloyd's Register SNS Regional Geological Maps (Open Source). Open Government Licence v3 (OGL). Contains data © 2017 Oil and Gas Authority. The 10km grid square distribution map is based on available species records within the current reporting period.

Table 1: Table summarising the conservation status for S1323 - Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*). Overall conservation status for species is based on assessments of range, population, habitat for the species, and future prospects.

Overall Conservation Status (see section 11)

Unfavourable-bad (U2)

Breakdown of Overall Conservation Status

Range (see section 5)

Unfavourable-bad (U2)

Population (see section 6)

Unfavourable-inadequate (U1)

Habitat for the species (see section 7)

Unknown (XX)

Future prospects (see section 10)

Unknown (XX)

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National Level

1. General information

1.1 Country	England
1.2 Species code	S1323
1.3 Species scientific name	<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>
1.4 Alternative species scientific name	
1.5 Common name	Bechstein's bat
Annex(es)	II, IV

2. Maps

2.1 Sensitive species	No
2.2 Year or period	1995-2024
2.3 Distribution map	Yes
2.4 Distribution map; Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data

2.5 Additional information

The range map has been produced following the same methodology that was used in 2007 and 2013 whereby a 45km alpha hull value has been used for all species with a starting range unit of individual 10km squares. In 2018 range was taken from Mathews et al, whereby an alpha hull value of 20km was drawn around the presence records, which represented the best balance between the inclusion of unoccupied sites (i.e. where records are sparse but close enough for inclusion) and the exclusion of occupied areas due to gaps in the data (i.e. where records exist but are too isolated for inclusion). An additional 10km buffer was added to the final hull polygon to provide smoothing to the hull and to ensure that the hull covered the areas recorded rather than intersecting them. That process led to the production of much finer detailed maps being produced. However, this approach to mapping was not an option for this reporting round (2018-2024). Additionally, for the 2026 Regulation 9A reporting round the distribution datasets reported for all features have been created using existing Natural England source data and additional datasets made available to Natural England for Regulation 9a reporting under Open Government (OGL) or Creative Commons (CC-BY) license.

The reinterpretation of source data is a methodological change which has resulted in changes to mapped distribution and hence range for some features. In a few cases the available data is known to not reflect the full distribution of a feature. In order to attempt to overcome this issue, the date range for the collection of presence data for this species has been set at 1995-2024. Where apparent change is an artefact of the mapping approach, rather than real change in distribution it will be highlighted, and associated changes in range explained, in the assessment text.

3. Information related to Annex V Species

3.1 Is the species taken in the wild / exploited?

3.2 What measures have been taken?

a) Regulations regarding access to property

b) Temporary or local prohibition on the taking of specimens in the wild and exploitation

c) Regulation of the periods and/or methods of taking specimens

d) Application of hunting and fishing rules which take account of the conservation of such populations

e) Establishment of a system of licences for taking specimens or of quotas

f) Regulation of the purchase, sale, offering for sale, keeping for sale, or transport for sale of specimens

g) Breeding in captivity of animal species as well as artificial propagation of plant species

Other measures

Other measures description

3.3: Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild for Mammals and Acipenseridae (Fish)

a) Unit

Table 2: Quantity taken from the wild during the reporting period (see 3.3a for units). For species with defined hunting seasons, Season 1 refers to 2018/2019 (autumn 2018 to spring 2019), and Season 6 to 2023/2024. For species without hunting seasons, data are reported by calendar year: Year 1 is 2019, and Year 6 is 2024.

	Season/ year 1	Season/ year 2	Season/ year 3	Season/ year 4	Season/ year 5	Season/ year 6
b) Minimum	-	-	-	-	-	-
c) Maximum	-	-	-	-	-	-
d) Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-

3.4: Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild; Method used

3.5: Additional information

No additional information

Biogeographical Level

4. Biogeographical and marine regions

4.1 Biogeographical or marine region where the species occurs ATL

4.2 Sources of information

See section 14 References

5. Range

5.1 Surface area (km²) 21,362.86

5.2 Short-term trend; Period 1995-2024

5.3 Short-term trend; Direction Stable

5.4 Short-term trend; Magnitude

a) Estimated minimum

b) Estimated maximum

c) Pre-defined range

d) Unknown

e) Type of estimate

f) Rate of decrease

5.5 Short-term trend; Method used Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data

5.6 Long-term trend; Period

5.7 Long-term trend; Direction

5.8 Long-term trend; Magnitude

a) Minimum

b) Maximum

c) Rate of decrease

5.9 Long-term trend; Method used

5.10 Favourable Reference Range (FRR)

a) Area (km²) 52,700

b) Pre-defined increment

c) Unknown No

d) Method used Model-based approach

e) Quality of information low

5.11 Change and reason for change in surface area of range

a) Change Yes

b) Genuine change Yes

c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data Yes

d) Different method Yes

e) No information	No
f) Other reason	No
g) Main reason	Use of different method

5.12 Additional information

There has been a change of range due to the use of a different method as explained in the audit parameter 5.3. Despite the apparent reduction in range due to the change in method, the range is possibly still increasing slightly. This is due largely to greater survey effort and the use of different methods i.e. lures, harp traps, mist nets and radio-tracking.

6. Population

6.1 Year or period 1995-2024

6.2 Population size (in reporting unit)

a) Unit	number of individuals
b) Minimum	10,200
c) Maximum	55,000
d) Best single value	21,600

6.3 Type of estimate Best estimate

6.4 Quality of extrapolation to reporting unit low

6.5 Additional population size (using population unit other than reporting unit)

a) Unit	
b) Minimum	
c) Maximum	
d) Best single value	
e) Type of estimate	

6.6 Population size; Method used Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data

6.7 Short-term trend; Period	2013-2024
6.8 Short-term trend; Direction	Unknown
6.9 Short-term trend; Magnitude	
a) Estimated minimum	
b) Estimated maximum	
c) Pre-defined range	
d) Unknown	
e) Type of estimate	
f) Rate of decrease	
6.10 Short-term trend; Method used	Insufficient or no data available
6.11 Long-term trend; Period	
6.12 Long-term trend; Direction	
6.13 Long-term trend; Magnitude	
a) Minimum	
b) Maximum	
c) Confidence interval	
d) Rate of decrease	
6.14 Long-term trend; Method used	
6.15 Favourable Reference Population (FRP)	
ai) Population size	28,000
a ii) Unit	number of individuals
b) Pre-defined increment	
c) Unknown	No
d) Method used	Model-based approach

e) **Quality of information** low

6.16 Change and reason for change in population size

a) **Change** No

b) **Genuine change**

c) **Improved knowledge or more accurate data**

d) **Different method**

e) **No information**

f) **Other reason**

g) **Main reason**

6.17 Additional information

No additional information

6.18 **Age structure, mortality and reproduction deviation** Unknown

7. Habitat for the species

7.1 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat (for long-term survival)

a) **Is area of occupied habitat sufficient?** Unknown

b) **Is quality of occupied habitat sufficient?** Unknown

c) **If No or Unknown, is there a sufficiently large area of unoccupied habitat of suitable quality?** Unknown

7.2 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat; Method used

a) **Sufficiency of area of occupied habitat; Method used** Insufficient or no data available

b) Sufficiency of quality of occupied habitat; Method used	Insufficient or no data available
7.3 Short-term trend; Period	1995-2024
7.4 Short-term trend; Direction	Unknown
7.5 Short-term trend; Method used	Insufficient or no data available
7.6 Long-term trend; Period	
7.7 Long-term trend; Direction	
7.8 Long-term trend; Method used	
7.9 Additional information	

No additional information

8. Main pressures

8.1 Characterisation of pressures

Table 3: Pressures affecting the species, including timing and importance/impact ranking. Pressures are defined as factors acting currently and/or during the reporting period (2019–2024). Rankings are: High (direct/immediate influence and/or large spatial extent) and Medium (moderate direct/immediate influence, mainly indirect and/or regional extent).

Pressure	Timing	Ranking
PA04: Removal of small landscape features for agricultural land parcel consolidation (hedges, stone walls, rushes, open ditches, springs, solitary trees, etc.)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PB02: Conversion from one type of forestry land use to another	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	High (H)
PB05: Logging without replanting or natural regrowth	Ongoing	High (H)
PB06: Logging or thinning (excluding clear cutting)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	High (H)
PB07: Removal of dead and dying trees (including debris)	Ongoing	High (H)

PB08: Removal of old trees (excluding dead or dying trees)	Ongoing	High (H)
PB09: Clear-cutting, removal of all trees	Ongoing	High (H)
PB14: Forest management reducing old growth forests	Ongoing	High (H)
PB16: Application of natural or synthetic fertilisers in forestry	Ongoing	Medium (M)
PE01: Roads, paths, railroads and related infrastructure	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	High (H)
PH05: Tree surgery, felling/removal of roadside trees and vegetation for public safety	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)

8.2 Sources of information

See section 14 References

8.3 Additional information

No additional information

9. Conservation measures

9.1: Status of measures

a) Are measures needed?

Yes

b) Indicate the status of measures

Measures identified and taken

9.2 Main purpose of the measures taken

Maintain the current range, population and/or habitat for the species

9.3 Location of the measures taken

Both inside and outside National Site Network

9.4 Response to measures

Long-term results (after 2036)

9.5 List of main conservation measures

Table 4: Key conservation measures addressing current pressures and/or anticipated threats during the next two reporting periods (2025–2036). Measures are ranked by importance/impact: High (direct/immediate influence and/or large spatial extent) and Medium (moderate direct/immediate influence, mainly indirect and/or regional extent).

Conservation measure	Ranking
MA02: Restore small landscape features on agricultural land	Medium (M)
MB01: Prevent conversion of (semi-) natural habitats into forests and of (semi-) natural forests into intensive forest plantation	High (H)
MB04: Adapt/manage reforestation and forest regeneration	High (H)
MB05: Adapt/change forest management and exploitation practices	High (H)
MB06: Stop forest management and exploitation practices	High (H)
MB09: Manage the use of natural and synthetic fertilisers, liming and pest control in forestry	High (H)
ME01: Reduce impact of transport operation and infrastructure	Medium (M)

9.6 Additional information

No additional information

10. Future prospects

10.1a Future trends of parameters

ai) Range	Overall stable
bi) Population	Negative - decreasing $\leq 1\%$ (one percent or less) per year on average
ci) Habitat for the species	Unknown

10.1b Future prospects of parameters

aii) Range	Unknown
bii) Population	Unknown
cii) Habitat for the species	Unknown

10.2 Additional information

Whilst, the current range of the species appears to have remained relatively stable, accepting a change in mapping methodologies as previously described, the future range of the species is unknown due to uncertainties over the balance of good quality ancient

woodland being lost for a variety of reasons , the rate of replanting and the time taken to nrmature to enable the any newly planted or naturally regenerated woodland to be suitable for roosting.

11. Conclusions

11.1 Range	Unfavourable-bad (U2)
11.2 Population	Unfavourable-inadequate (U1)
11.3 Habitat for the species	Unknown (XX)
11.4 Future prospects	Unknown (XX)
11.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Unfavourable-bad (U2)
11.6 Overall trend in Conservation Status	Unknown

11.7 Change and reason for change in conservation status

This field is not reported as the period 2019-2024 marks the first instance in which conservation status has been assessed at the national level, meaning no comparisons to previous reports can be drawn.

11.7 Change and reason for change in conservation status trend

This field is not reported as the period 2019-2024 marks the first instance in which conservation status has been assessed at the national level, meaning no comparisons to previous reports can be drawn.

11.8 Additional information

No additional information

12. UK National Site Network (pSCIs, SCIs, SACs) coverage for Annex II species

12.1 Population size inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network

a) Unit	number of individuals
b) Minimum	

c) Maximum

d) Best single value

12.2 Type of estimate

12.3 Population size inside the network; Method used Insufficient or no data available

12.4 Short-term trend of population size within the network; Direction Unknown

12.5 Short-term trend of population size within the network; Method used Insufficient or no data available

12.6 Short-term trend of habitat for the species inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network; Direction Unknown

12.7 Short-term trend of habitat for the species inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network; Method used Insufficient or no data available

12.8 Additional information

Although, the species is monitored where it occurs, there is currently only sufficient information to record species presence rather than populations or any changes in trend for this species. At the last assessment 98.5% of SAC's for the species were reported as in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition.

13. Complementary information**13.1 Justification of percentage thresholds for trends**

No justification information

13.2 Trans-boundary assessment

No trans-boundary assessment information

13.2 Other relevant information

No other relevant information

14. References

Biogeographical and marine regions

4.2 Sources of information

- BCT (2020). Core Sustainance Zones and habitats of importance for designing Biodiversity Net Gain for bats. Bat Conservation Trust, London.
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- Greenaway, F and Hill, D.A. (2004). Woodland management advice for Bechstein's bat and barbastelle bat. ENRR 658. English Nature, Peterborough
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- JNCC. (2019). Fourth Report by the UK under Article 17 on the implementation of the Habitats Directive from January 2013 to December 2012. Peterborough: JNCC
- Mathews, F., Kubasiewicz, L.M., Gurnell, J., Harrower, C., McDonald, R.A., Shore, R.F (2018). A review of the population and conservation status of British Mammals. A report by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage.
- Miller, H. (2011). Bechstein's Bat Survey: September 2007 - September 2011: Report held by the Bat Conservation Trust.
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- Palmer, E., Pimley, E., Sutton, G., and Birks, J. (2013). A study on the population size, foraging range and roosting ecology of Bechstein's bats at Grafton Wood SSSI Worcestershire. Report for the People's Trust for Endangered Species and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.
- Schofield, H. and Morris, C., (2000). Ranging behaviour and habitat preferences of female Bechstein's bat. *Myotis bechsteinii* (Kuhl, 1818), in summer: Report held by The Vincent Wildlife Trust.

Main pressures

8.2 Sources of information

PA04: Legal and administrative measures continue to be required to ensure that the protection provided by the legislation is effective. However, although some measures have been identified for the species, the list is likely to be incomplete as several knowledge gaps persists for this species and further research is needed to identify measures and the practical implementation of those measures for this species.(JNCC 2019)

15. Explanatory Notes

Field label	Note
1.5: Common name	<p>The Bechstein's bat is a rare species with its core range in Britain being in Southern England from Gloucestershire to Sussex, although individuals have recently been found as far north as Herefordshire and Worcestershire (Natural England, 2023). The known distribution has been significantly improved due to the Bat Conservation Trust's Bechstein's Bat Project (Miller, 2011) and continued survey effort through other monitoring programmes and as a result of surveys undertaken for development work. Quiet echolocation calls mean that this species cannot be monitored effectively with acoustic detectors. Roosts are difficult to detect. Surveys with acoustic lures, traps and radio-tracking individuals are used to locate new roosts/colonies. The species is strongly associated with broadleaved woodland, particularly semi-natural ancient woodland with dense understorey often greater than 25 hectares in size (Schofield and Morris, 2000; Greenaway and Hill, 2004) but it also forages along large hedgerows and wooded riparian corridors. They can roost in individual trees found in these environments (Palmer et al 2013). Colonies have also been found foraging in sparse woodland cover, coniferous and open habitats (Damant and Cohen 2016; Curry 2021). There is evidence of segregation of the sexes into different woodlands, with males potentially using less optimal habitats (Harris and Yalden, 2008; Dietz and Pir, 2011). Maternity roosts are usually located in trees, most commonly in woodpecker holes and rot holes but also in other crevices. A wide range of tree species are used including oak, ash, aspen, London Plane, crack-willow and field maple (Palmer et al., 2013; Mathews et al., 2018). In some woodlands particularly those with few natural tree holes, colonies can make extensive use of bat boxes. Only a single building roost is known in GB (Schofield and Morris, 2000).</p>

5.3: Short-term trend; Direction	<p>Range is based on presence data collected between 1995-2024. Areas that contain very isolated records may not have been included in the distribution. The range map has been produced following the same methodology that was used in 2007 and 2013 whereby a 45km alpha hull value has been used for all species with a starting range unit of individual 10km squares. In 2018 range was taken from Mathews et al, whereby an alpha hull value of 20km was drawn around the presence records, which represented the best balance between the inclusion of unoccupied sites (i.e. where records are sparse but close enough for inclusion) and the exclusion of occupied areas due to gaps in the data (i.e. where records exist but are too isolated for inclusion). An additional 10km buffer was added to the final hull polygon to provide smoothing to the hull and to ensure that the hull covered the areas recorded rather than intersecting them. That process led to the production of much finer detailed maps being produced. However, this approach to mapping was not an option for this reporting round (2018-2024). This has resulted in an apparent reduction in range from 23,300km² to 21,362km². The range however, is likely to have remained stable or may possibly have increased slightly. The current range map is an artefact of the differing methodologies used to produce the range map.</p>
5.10: Favourable Reference Range (FRR)	<p>The favourable reference range for this species has been set at 52,700km² based on habitat suitability modelling for the species.</p>
6.3: Type of estimate	<p>The population estimate is that which was used for the previous reporting round, taken from Mathews et al (2018). These estimates were entirely derived from expert opinion: information from 75 roosts was used to calculate roost size, sex ratios and roost density and these parameters used to estimate population size within the species range in broadleaved woodland, a key habitat for the species. It was assumed that all bats in pre-breeding maternity colonies were female and males would be in equal numbers in the surrounding habitat but on their own or in small groups.</p>

	<p>However, no consulted expert in this study had information on the sex ratio of the population. While these estimates have large confidence intervals, alternative approaches provide estimates within this range (NE, 2023). However, it should be cautioned that if some broadleaved woodlands are occupied exclusively by females and others exclusively by males then this approach may substantially over-estimate the population size by up to a factor of 2. This is because total adult density was computed as being twice that of the adult females counted at maternity roosts.</p>
6.8: Short-term trend; Direction	There is insufficient data available to allow a calculation this parameter.
6.15: Favourable Reference Population (FRP)	<p>A favourable population size has been calculated using the potential habitat identified through habitat suitability modelling. Taking an area of broadleaved woodland of at least 25 hectares as potentially suitable habitat and using the average number of individuals in a maternity colony (42.5; Mathews et al 2018) produced an estimate of 14,320 individuals (CI: 6,740 - 36,400). This estimate is likely to be more representative of the female population as 25 hectares is thought to be the minimum woodland size for maternity colonies. To provide a figure for the total number of individuals including the male population, an estimate was calculated based on suitable broadleaved woodlands of at least 2.5 hectares. This minimum woodland patch size is based on expert opinion but is thought to rule out woodlands that are unlikely to support a population of Bechstein's bat. This produced a population estimate of 27,900 (CI: 13,120 - 70,850). Given the proposed increase in range for favourable conservation status, a favourable population level of 28,000 is proposed which is in line with the potential habitat identified through the habitat suitability modelling. This figure has been rounded up to account for the uncertainties in the data (NE, 2023).</p>
7.1: Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat	<p>When determining habitat for the species both roosting opportunities and the habitats to support foraging and commuting around roosts should be considered. Bechstein's bats are considered to utilise a core</p>

	<p>sustenance zone around a roost of 3km (BCT 2020). There is currently insufficient information on the percentage of potentially suitable habitat within the range that is occupied. Studies assume 100% occupancy, leading to an overestimation in habitat availability and extent (JNCC 2019). The current number of suitable roost sites is also unknown (NE, 2023)</p>
7.4: Short-term trend; Direction	<p>As the area and quality of known occupied and unknown habitat cannot be assessed the short term trend direction is unknown</p>
7.5: Short-term trend; Method used	<p>There is insufficient information to assess the trend</p>
8.1: Characterisation of pressures	<p>Bechstein's bat is strongly associated with woodland, both for roosting and foraging, though it also uses underground places for hibernation. Specialist habitat requirements, low population density and slow population growth are likely to have made this species particularly vulnerable to factors such as: loss and fragmentation of ancient deciduous woodland habitat; loss, destruction and disturbance of roosts in trees and underground sites and the reduction in numbers of insect prey. The species is reliant on tree roosts and moves frequently, requiring a large number of trees with suitable crevices. Loss of native broadleaf trees through new pathogens could have a serious long term impact through reduction of resource. (JNCC, 2019)</p>
9.5: List of main conservation measures	<p>Low population density and slow population growth are likely to make this species particularly vulnerable to factors such as loss and fragmentation of ancient deciduous woodland habitat, trees and underground sites and the reduction in numbers of insect prey due to habitat simplification and factors such as fertiliser and pesticide use. The availability of large deciduous woodlands, containing dead and dying mature trees with features that can support roosting bats are major factors likely to affect the species status (JNCC, 2019). While attention is placed on planting schemes to create more habitat for this species, action needs to focus on the maintenance of existing habitat. Whilst much suitable habitat is ancient woodland,</p>

which cannot be recreated, other woodland types also provide suitable conditions and new planting can eventually provide habitat which might be colonised. This is most likely by expanding current sites rather than by creating isolated new ones. These measures will provide additional foraging opportunities for colonies and create a larger network of connected habitat favouring gene flow (considering the species' low dispersal abilities). Such measures in the western part of the species' range, for example, should make populations more resilient. Climate change could also produce a population increase if a network of suitable habitat allows the species to shift range and adapt to warmer conditions. However, there is currently no evidence that the population will successfully adapt to climate change (NE 2023)

11.5: Overall assessment of Conservation Status

The overall assessment for this species has been determined as unfavourable bad due to the favourable reference population producing a slightly negative trend in comparison to the current population estimate. A two year national survey is currently underway to more precisely understand the current population for the species. The current range for the species is also more than 10% below the favourable reference range which leads to the species being given an overall assessment of unfavourable bad.