



2010 report from 3 Danish European Bat Night events: A species – not previously reported in an area – was observed



The first Danish European Bat Night events ever took place on Funen on the 12th and 13th of August. Both events took place in and near Sollerup Forest in a mosaic landscape with forest, hedgerows, open grasslands, meadows and near the largest lake on Funen. A third event took place on the 11th September in Gråsten forest, a deciduous forest in Southern Jutland near the German border. All three events were hosted by The Danish Forest and Nature Agency under the Danish Ministry of the Environment.

The events were targeted at two different groups. The first event was targeted at nature guides and the two others were publicly announced events.

On the 12th of August, the objective of the event was to provide nature guides with hard facts on bat ecology. Hans Baagøe, a Danish expert and leading researcher on bats from the University of Copenhagen, gave an intensive presentation of bat ecology, including echolocation technique and different bat species niches in their use of the landscape for hunting grounds and roosting places. After the presentation and discussion, the group of approximately 25 persons went into the forest to observe and listen to bats with echolocation equipment.

The sun went down at 8.30 pm. It was cloudy with a high humidity due to heavy rains earlier that day. Seeing that these were not the most favourable weather conditions for this type of events, we were not too optimistic about the outcome of this event. However, not long after sundown the first Noctule bats (*Nyctalus noctula*) appeared from the forest into the open grassland hunting along the forest edge. Soon they were followed by Serotine bats (*Eptesicus serotinus*) and Soprano bats (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). All three species are common in Denmark. Near Arreskov Lake Nathusius's bats (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) and Daubenton bats (*Myotis daubentonii*) were hunting. The latter was hunting in its very characteristic way just above the surface of the lake - a fascinating sight with a strong flashlight. A total of 6 different species were observed during that night. One of them: the Parti-coloured bat (*Vespertilio murinus*) - has not previously been seen in this area which adds a 10x10 km square for this species to The Atlas of Danish Mammals.

The concept European Bat Nights was handed over to the group of nature guides as an inspiration and hopefully more Danish European Bat Night events will take place next year.

A public event took place the following evening in the same area. Our nature guide used knowledge and ideas gained from the experience of the previous evening. Echolocation equipment with loudspeakers was used for all to be able to hear the sounds of bats. The event was spiced up with tales from Danish folklore on bats. In total 70 peoples participated.

A third event took place on the 11th September in Gråsten forest, an old deciduous forest in Southern Jutland. Here the local nature guide together with the bat expert Morten Christensen hosted the event. For practical reasons the number of participants were restricted to 30 people and booking was required. In fact, at least twice as many wanted to join the event. Morten Christensen was interviewed by the regional radio station. Again, echolocation equipment with loudspeakers was used for all to be able to hear the sounds of bats. The main attraction was observation of Daubenton bats hunting on the Gråsten Lake with the Royal Gråsten Castle in the background.

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By: Mogens Krog, MSc. Forestry and project manager, The Danish Forest and Nature Agency, Funen.

