



Greater Horseshoe Bat Community Habitat Report for Chudleigh

Introduction



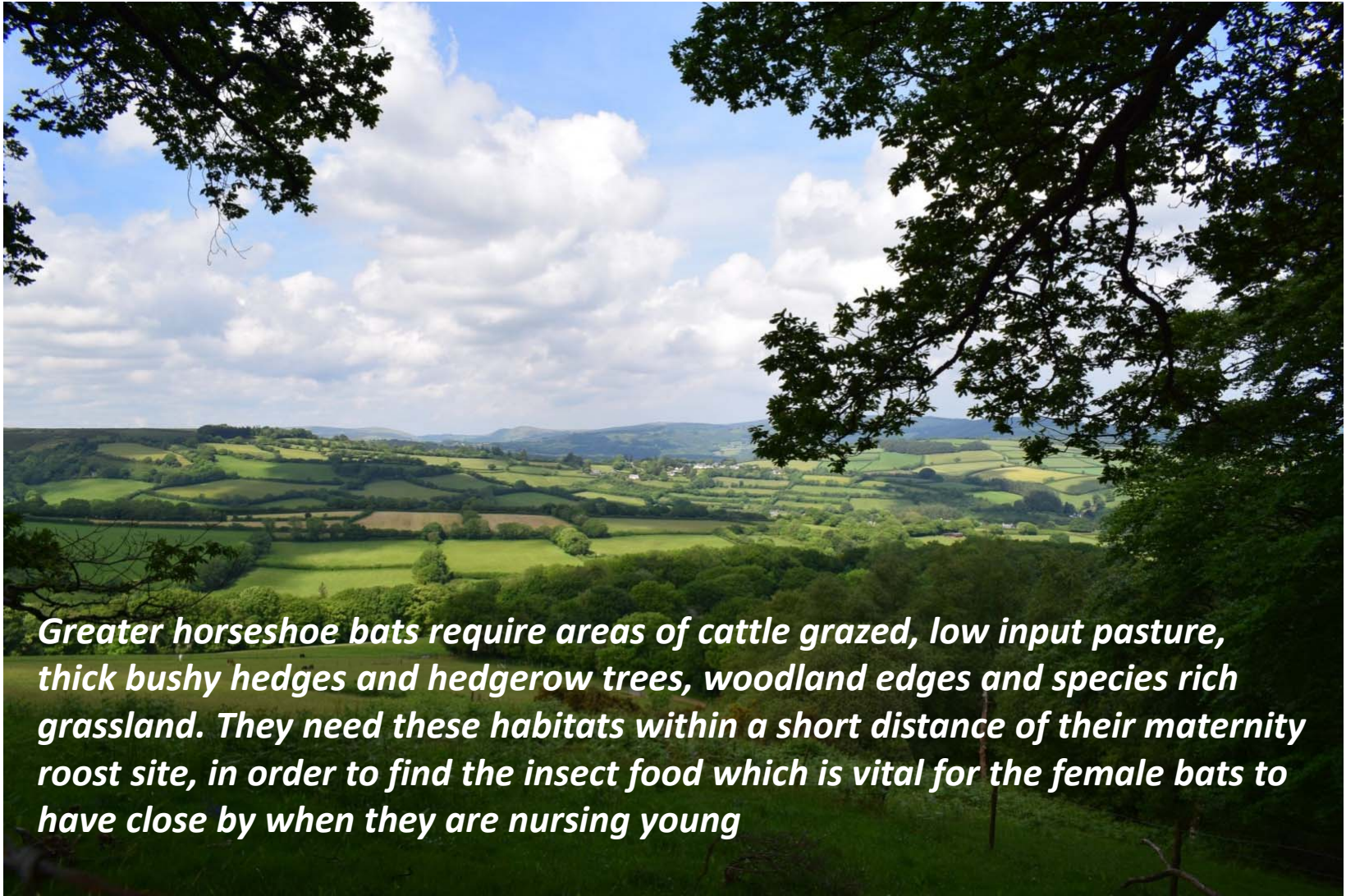
This report has been commissioned as part of the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project.

Working across Devon, the project is looking to secure the future of this species in the county, which is both its national, and international stronghold. Devon supports approximately one third of the current UK greater horseshoe bat population and it also holds the largest known maternity roost in western Europe.

Whilst greater horseshoe bats have been highlighted in planning, and have been the focus of more localised conservation effort, a need was identified to connect that effort together in a more cohesive way. The Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project, a partnership of 18 organisations led by Devon Wildlife Trust, is working towards this goal by ensuring the habitats needed are present across Devon, our knowledge of the bat and its requirements is better, and that people know about the species and can help it meet future challenges.

This report explains how the habitats in your area might be used by greater horseshoe bats, and how you can help ensure consideration is given to retaining and even enhancing these areas, as your community develops further.

Greater Horseshoe Bat Habitat



Greater horseshoe bats require areas of cattle grazed, low input pasture, thick bushy hedges and hedgerow trees, woodland edges and species rich grassland. They need these habitats within a short distance of their maternity roost site, in order to find the insect food which is vital for the female bats to have close by when they are nursing young

Greater Horseshoe Bat Habitat

Greater horseshoe bats use different roost sites at different times of year. In the summer the breeding females congregate in a maternity roost: these are usually old barns with slate roofs which remain dark, undisturbed and warm throughout the summer months, creating the perfect conditions for the females to give birth and raise their young.

During the winter they hibernate in caves, cellars, mine adits and other places which provide stable cool temperatures and high humidity levels to ensure they do not dry out. When moving between winter and summer sites in the spring they will also use a variety of other structures as temporary roosts. In the autumn the males set up territories to attract females for mating; these can be in quite small buildings.

Due to the fact that the roost sites can be several kilometres apart, it is important to maintain a network of pasture, hedges and woodlands across the wider landscape, so that there are plenty of feeding opportunities for the bats and easy navigation routes to help them move through their environment

Habitat Map of Sustenance Zone

The key areas for bats are shown in shades of green on this map. These areas are mainly woodland, unimproved / semi-improved grassland and scrub. The watercourses (shown in blue) are also a key corridor for bats. Some agriculturally 'improved' grassland (shown in red) can be important if it is cattle-grazed, as dung beetles form a vital part of the bat's diet.

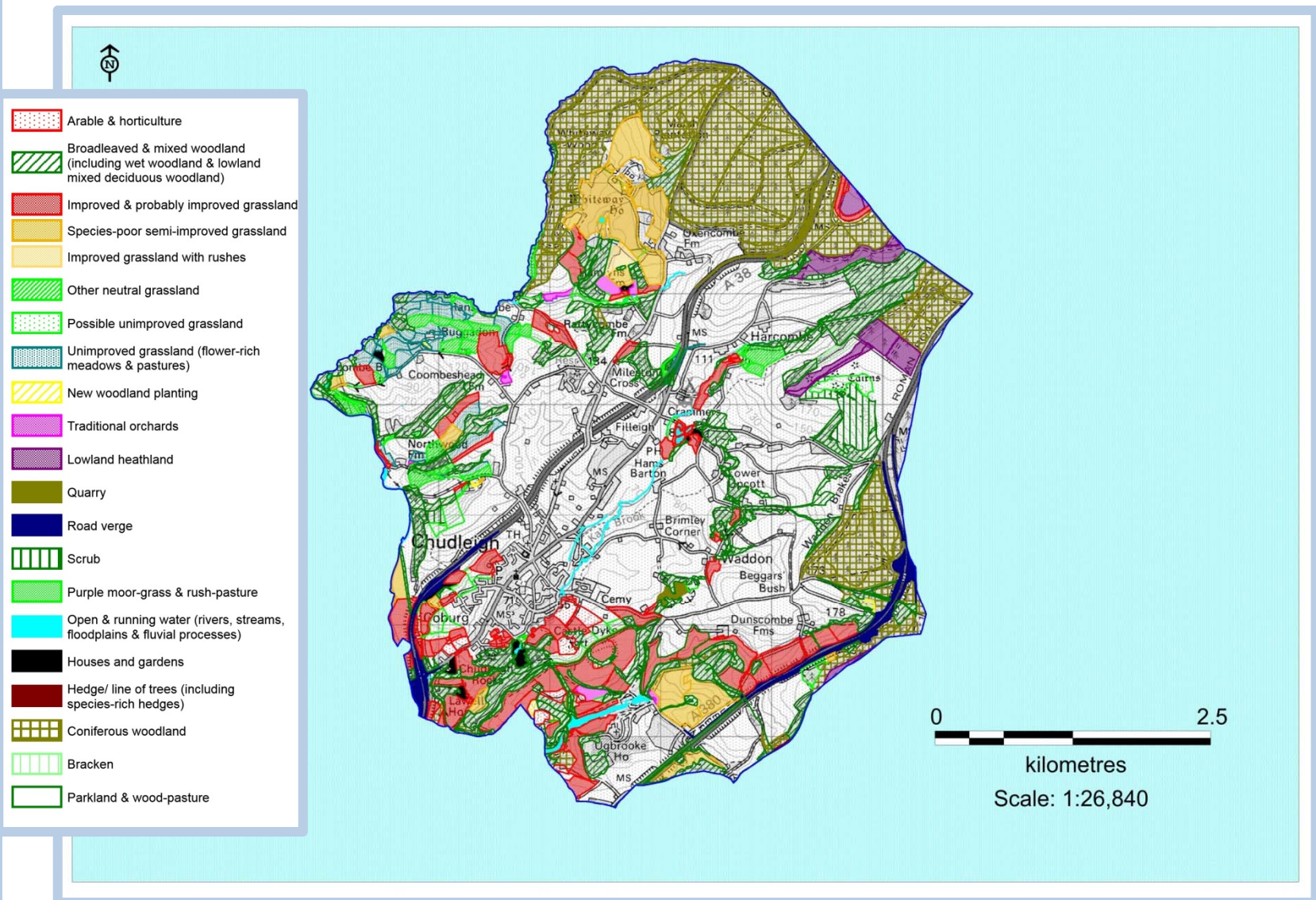


Within a 1km buffer of the greater horseshoe bat roost all habitats have been mapped.

Between 1km and 4km only 'key' habitats and corridors have been mapped, unless there is a clear linking feature (e.g. hedges/rivers). The main river valleys/corridors have been followed and mapped, and then areas around these filled in. Expanses of arable/improved land on plateaux, urban areas and buildings have been excluded from this mapping.

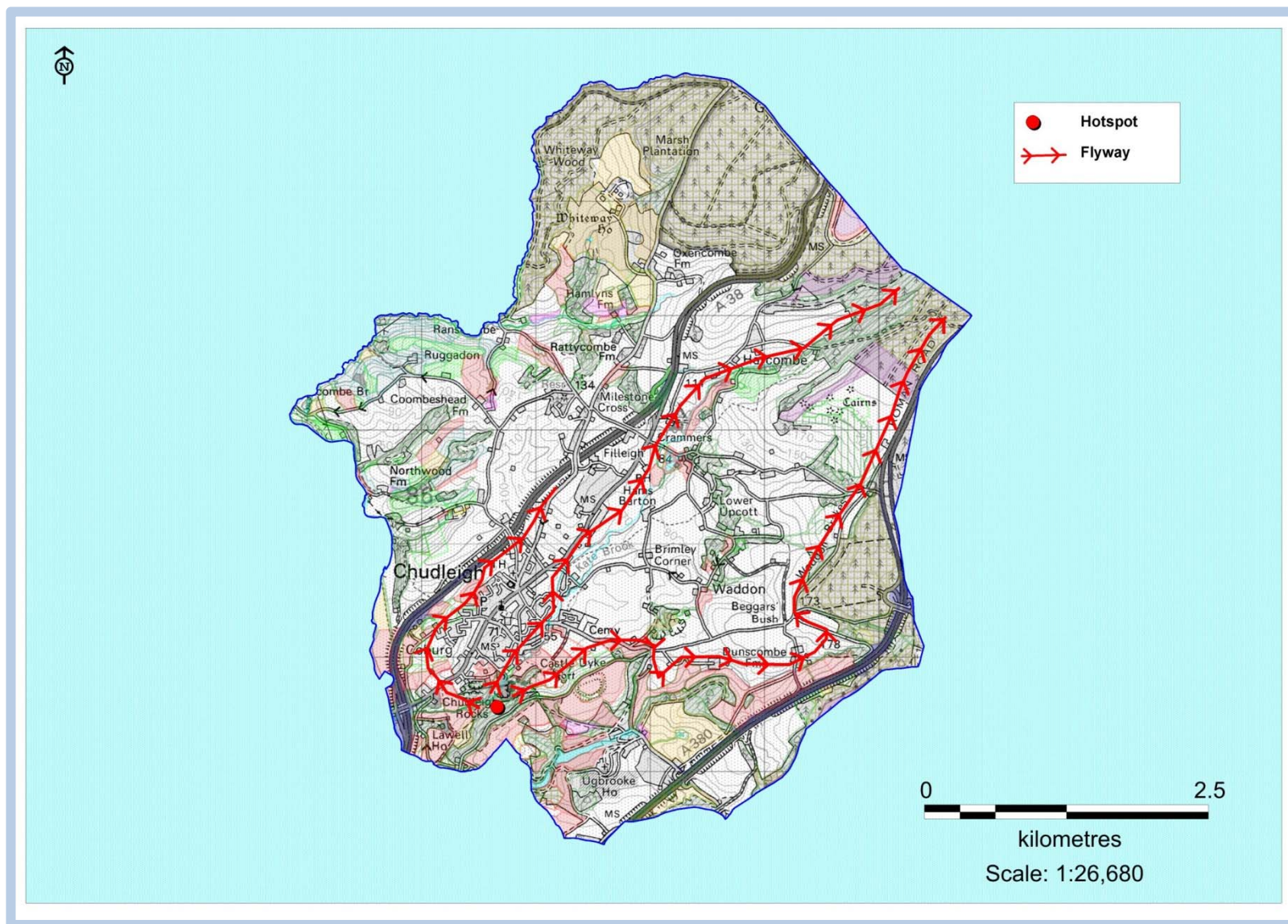
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Parish Habitat Map



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Habitat Map and Bat Flyways



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Bat Species in Devon

Bats are present across the county and have international protection. They feed on insects so are more likely to be found where there is **semi-natural habitat**. Bats also use linear features such as **hedges** and **streams** as navigation routes to travel to and from feeding areas and summer and winter roost sites. A whole range of **buildings and structures** can be used for breeding roosts and hibernation roosts. Bats are affected indirectly by **lighting associated with new developments** and some will desert roosts and foraging areas when there is light pollution.

DBRC holds records of the following bat species in the County. Those shaded blue have been recorded from Chudleigh parish:

Common Name	Scientific Name
Bechstein's Bat	<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>
Brandt's Bat	<i>Myotis brandtii</i>
Brown Long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
Daubenton's Bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>
Greater Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>
Grey Long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>
Lesser Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>
Lesser Noctule	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>
Nathusius's Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>
Natterer's Bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>
Noctule Bat	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>
Serotine	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>
Western Barbastelle	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>
Whiskered Bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>

All bats are protected under the UK and European legislation making it illegal to disturb, injure or kill them.

Greater horseshoe bats are also protected under the **Habitats and Species Directive**, and the **Bern Convention** meaning that protected areas such as the South Hams Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) have been set up to protect their habitat

Bat Protection and Law

Greater Horseshoe Bat Consultation Zones:

Chudleigh is within a South Hams SAC Sustenance Zone and there are Strategic Flyways within the parish.

Strategic Flyways: these make up a key network of flight path zones connecting the component roosts of the South Hams SAC. The strategic flyways have been made 500 metres wide to provide a combination of alternative suitable routes. Flyways subject to a pinch point scenario are particularly susceptible to development pressure.

Sustenance Zone: these are key feeding and foraging zones. They consist of a 4km radius circle centred on each of the component roosts of the South Hams SAC (with the exception of Berry Head, on a peninsula which has a sustenance area of a circular sector approximately equal in area to a 4km radius circle). Existing urban non-vegetated areas should not be considered as key foraging areas.

For more information please refer to the Natural England Report 'South Hams SAC – Greater Horseshoe Bat Consultation Zone Planning Guidance'. This can be downloaded from the Natural England website:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/142010>

Greater Horseshoe Bat Vulnerabilities

Greater horseshoe bats are particularly susceptible to the following changes in their habitat that may arise as a result of development:

- ❖ **Impact on roost sites (including damage, destruction, disturbance and prevention of access);**
- ❖ **Removal, severance, obstruction or disturbance of linear features used for navigation and commuting;**
- ❖ **Change in habitat structure and composition (e.g. loss or change in quality, quantity and distribution of foraging habitat);**
- ❖ **Disturbance from illumination causing bats to change their use of an area;**
- ❖ **Physical injury by wind turbines and / or displacement from foraging or commuting habitat by wind turbines;**
- ❖ **Barrier effects across the landscape caused by new roads and increased risk of collision between bats and vehicles.**

For more information on managing land for greater horseshoe bats, please visit www.devonbatproject.org

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