

Report on Bat Surveys of Eynsham Fish Ponds, May - August 2004 **Oxfordshire Bat Group**

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Report compiled by Kathy Warden

Background:

Existing records of bats in Eynsham drawn from the Oxfordshire Bat Group database revealed the presence in the town of roosts of two species, pipistrelle and brown long-eared. These records are the result of call-outs from the public, either roost-owners or someone finding a grounded bat, thus naturally do not represent anything like a true picture of bat presence in Eynsham.

Details of the database records are attached separately.

Fish Ponds Site Surveys:

Survey visits were made to the site on 26th May, 14th July and 27th August (details of findings are shown on attached plans). Circuits through the site were walked with BatBox III and Duet electronic bat detectors, the route varying slightly according to density of vegetation. With the exception of the July visit relatively little bat activity was noted, mainly the most common bat species, pipistrelle. Most bat activity was found in the vicinity of the Queen Mother's copse and along the substantial hedgerow at the eastern boundary of the site.

The three species found to be using the Fish Ponds as a feeding ground are as follows:

soprano pipistrelle, common pipistrelle, noctule.

The presence of brown long-eared bats, recorded as having a roost elsewhere in the town in 1995, was not picked up. However this species is particularly difficult to pick up on detectors due to the low intensity and short range of its call (it is also known as the "whispering bat").

Recommendations for site improvements for bats:

1. Provision of roost sites:

Of the three species encountered both species of pipistrelle roost primarily in buildings. The noctule bat often occupies tree roosts. All these species are also known to use artificial roost sites, i.e. bat boxes. The trees on site offer little in the way of natural roost sites therefore the introduction of bat boxes is suggested. The most favourable location would be trees within the Queen Mother's Copse. Many of the trees elsewhere on site are inappropriate for siting of bat boxes. For example the introduced horse chestnuts and maples on either side of the ponds have low, dense canopies with relatively small branch diameter. The mature willow at the east end of the site would normally be considered a good candidate and significant bat activity was often found in that vicinity. However the presence of bonfire remains beneath the tree suggests that that location may be subject to a high degree of disturbance.

Bat boxes are usually sited three to a tree facing south-east, south-west and north respectively. Flight paths to the boxes need to be fairly free of obstruction thus some minor branch removal may be required. Boxes should be sited sufficiently high to discourage vandalism and casual interference. Thus the "ideal" tree will be of sufficient height and girth to accommodate three boxes at an appropriate height whilst requiring the minimum amount of pruning to allow clear flight paths.

Further information on bat box construction and siting is provided in the attached leaflet.

2. Improvement to feeding habitat:

i) Increase structural diversity of the vegetation:

All British bats are insectivorous thus the attractiveness of the site to foraging bats can be expected to increase if insect abundance and diversity is increased. This can be encouraged by enhancing the structural diversity of the vegetation using native species. This will of course also have positive effects for other types of wildlife. The heavy weighting of past tree-planting towards a small number of introduced species such as horse chestnuts and maples is a negative factor in this regard which might be counteracted by plantings of native shrubs, for example. Conversely the insect-rich native hedgerows were often a focus of bat activity.

ii) Provide open water:

Restoring the fish ponds to provide at least some open water would be very important in adding further plant diversity. Again this would improve insect levels and possibly attract an additional bat species, i.e. Daubenton's bat, a specialist feeder over water.

Other information sources:

Bat Boxes leaflet (copy provided)

www.bats.org.uk (website of the Bat Conservation Trust)

KJW/10.01.05

Bats in Eynsham: results from search of Oxfordshire Bat Group Database:

| Date | Species | Location | Type of Record |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 07.09.90 | Pipistrelle | SP432098 | grounded bat |
| 26.10.93 | Brown long-eared | SP413094 | roost |
| 08.09.95 | Brown long-eared (immature) | SP430069 | roost |
| 19.03.04 | Pipistrelle | SP433097 | roost (long term, 12 yrs+) |

- ★ Noctule
- Soprano pipistrelle
- ▲ Common pipistrelle
- unclassified
- route taken
- > direction of travel

Eynsham Fishponds
 Bat Survey
 27 August 2004



St Peter's Church

Spring

63.00m OD

BA04A

Station Road

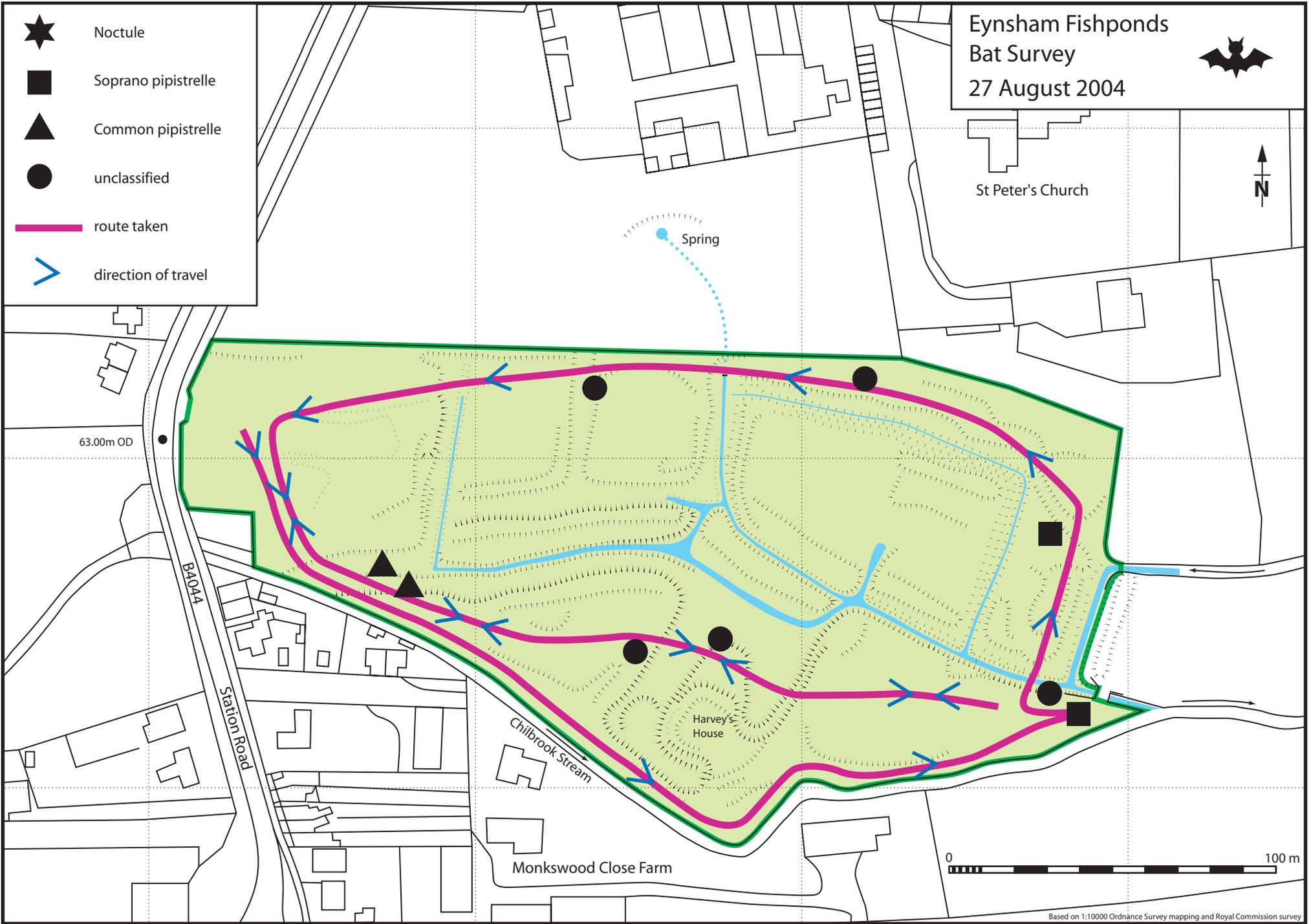
Chilbrook Stream

Harvey's House

Monkwood Close Farm



Based on 1:10000 Ordnance Survey mapping and Royal Commission survey



- ★ Noctule
- Soprano pipistrelle
- ▲ Common pipistrelle
- unclassified
- route taken
- > direction of travel

Eynsham Fishponds
 Bat Survey
 26 May 2004



St Peter's Church

Spring

63.00m OD

BA04A

Station Road

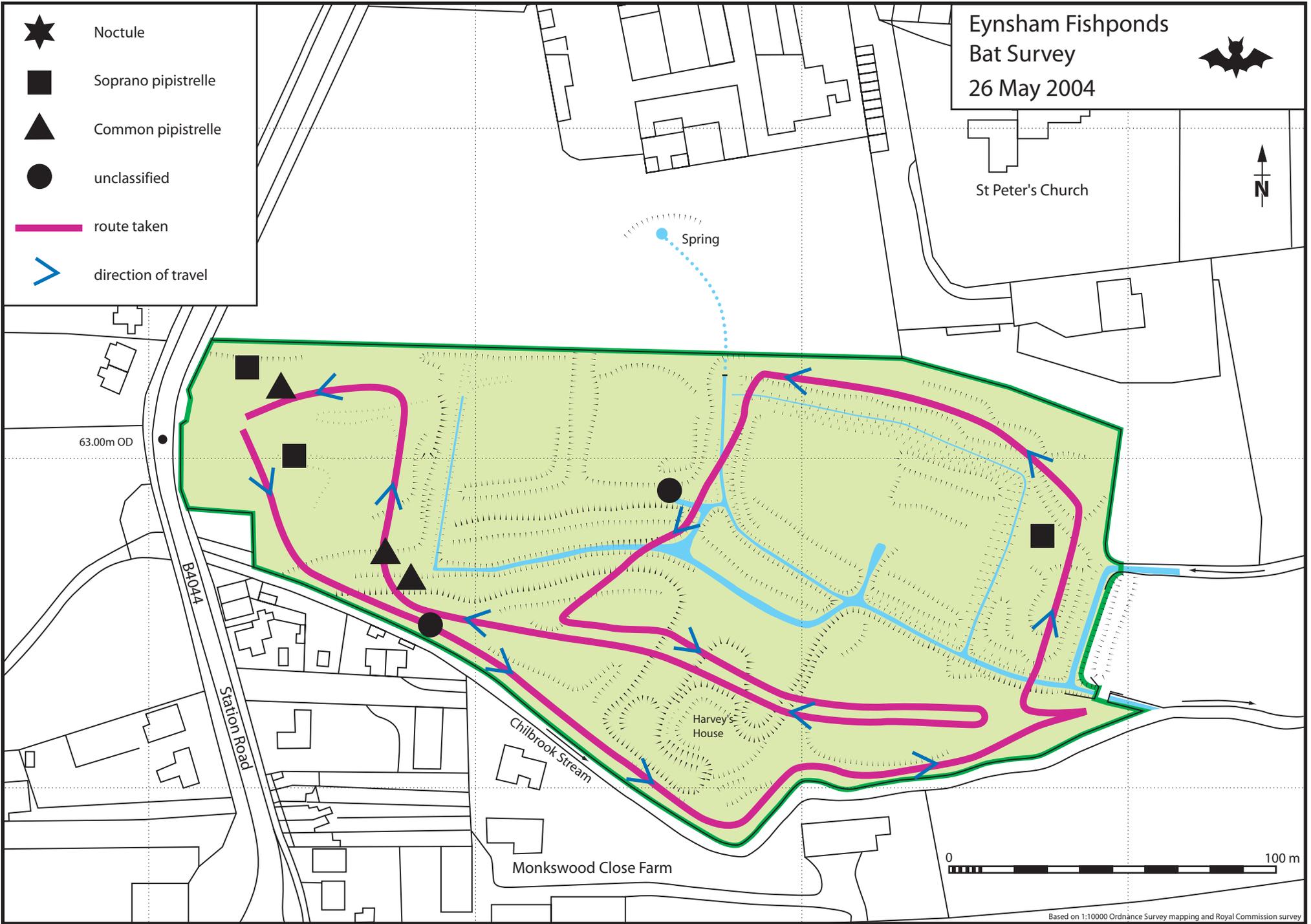
Chilbrook Stream

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- ★ Noctule
- Soprano pipistrelle
- ▲ Common pipistrelle
- unclassified
- route taken
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Eynsham Fishponds
 Bat Survey
 14 August 2004



St Peter's Church

Spring

63.00m OD

BA04A

Station Road

Chilbrook Stream

Harvey's House

Monkwood Close Farm



Based on 1:10000 Ordnance Survey mapping and Royal Commission survey

