



Species fact sheet

Myotis bechsteinii

Bechstein's bat

Bechsteinfledermaus
Murin de Bechstein
Vespertilio di Bechstein
Vespertil da Bechstein

Characteristics

Wingspan: 25-30 cm
Weight: 6-12 g
Max. age: 21 years
Offspring/year: 1

Status

Protection: protected by NCHA
Red List: VU (Vulnerable)
National Priority: 4 (moderata)
Other: Forest target species,
Target species sparse forest

Synergies: Greater mouse-eared bat, Brandt's bat, Alcatheo whiskered bat, Western barbastelle, Natterer's/cryptic bat



Jan Svetlik/flickr.com (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Maternity colony in a bat box

Habitat use

Roosts

In summer mainly in tree cavities, especially woodpecker cavities in trees >50 cm diameter at breast height (DBH). But also, in bat and bird boxes. Nursery colonies tend to be small, with a maximum of a few dozen animals. Regular roost changes in networks of up to 50 closely spaced tree cavities. Size of roost habitats: 10-100 ha.

Hibernates mainly in caves and tunnels.

Foraging grounds

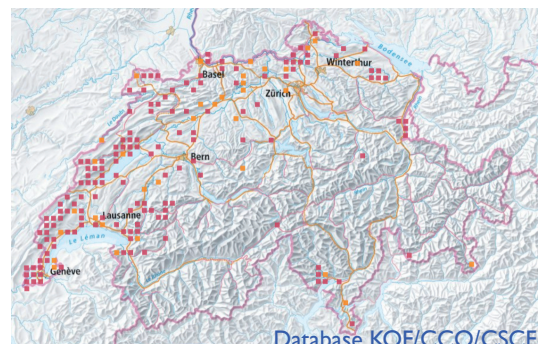
Forages exclusively in forests and forest-like structures such as large, old parks, orchards, etc. Prefers forests with sufficient flight space, e.g., open, single-layer or old-growth forests (especially oaks and beech) with wood stocks of >400 m³/ha. Foraging grounds usually only a few 100 m away from the roost, but in rare cases (in suboptimal roost environments) up to 8 km. Size of foraging grounds: 10-100 ha.

Flight corridors

Only rarely found outside the forest, which is why flight corridors in the structural sense are of secondary importance. However, the connectivity of forest habitats is of great importance due to the species' highly structure-bound flight behavior. Distances between summer and winter habitats are usually only a few kilometers.

Distribution

The sparse records indicate a patchy distribution in the lower altitudes of Switzerland. Less than 300 current records, of which only around 3 dozen are nursery roosts. These are offset by numerous records at swarming sites, which complicates interpretation.



Database KOF/CCO/CSCF

Threats

- Habitat loss due to removal of old oaks and beeches, too short a rotation period, excessive regeneration and ingrowth of existing old wood due to increased light incidence.
- Habitat loss due to excessive forest regeneration (dense young growth areas, lack of old wood)
- Habitat fragmentation due to illuminated infrastructure (roads, railroad lines) in the forest
- Loss of energy due to disturbance caused by cave tourism during hibernation

Mitigation measures

Conditionally conservation dependent. Conservation and promotion measures in the forest necessary: Monitoring of known nursery roosts, winter roosts and swarming sites, development of cantonal action plans and closing of knowledge gaps. Promotion of oak forests. Involvement of [Regional Coordination Center for Bat Conservation](#) in forestry practice at cantonal/forest district level recommended.

Roosts

Protection and promotion of roost (cavity) trees through appropriate forest management. Target: at least 10, preferably 20 roost trees per hectare of forest. Conservation of old beech and oak trees from 50 cm DBH. Ingrowth prevention of roost trees. Protection of known winter roosts in caves by restriction of access.

Foraging grounds

Protection and promotion of forests with sufficient flight space, especially open and single-layered forests. On the one hand by protecting the corresponding tree populations, on the other hand through targeted maintenance interventions (removal of young growth, livestock grazing, etc.). In the medium term, more extensive forest management in target areas. Increase of the rotation period and protection of the thickest trees from 50 cm BHD.

Flight corridors

Avoidance of illuminated roads, paths and railroad lines in the forest. Ensuring of the permeability of such structures by means of overhanging trees, green bridges, or underpasses. Consultation of bat conservation officers is mandatory for the construction of crossing aids.



An old Oak at a forest edge, absolutely worth preserving



Foraging and roosting habitat: single-layered forest with access to the forest floor

Literature

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Links

fledermausschutz.ch

institutions.ville-geneve.ch/fr/cco/

pipistrelliticino.ch

Bechsteinfledermaus.eu