

Norwich Bat Group - Press Release

On the 8th March 2011, 13 live *Nathusius'* pipistrelles were collected by Norfolk bat carer Catherine Greenhough from FA Aldridge's timber yard at Eccles, and taken into quarantine at her home.

The bats, 10 female and 3 male, had been accidentally imported into Britain within a shipment of timber planks from Dijon, France. As the timber was being unloaded from the pallets the bats were found hibernating in small gaps between the planks.

It is estimated that the bats had travelled nearly 900km from their home on a journey that would have taken at least nine hours.

The bats were in good condition and once awake they readily fed on mealworms and took water from a paintbrush. The bats were in captivity for around three weeks during which time they were cared for by Mick Finnemore, with assistance from Michelle Fielden (Norwich Bat Group) as Catherine was away in Trinidad looking at bats. During this time Colin Maxwell, Norfolk Trading Standards and the Bat Conservation Trust worked tirelessly and liaised with English and French authorities and French bat workers to ensure that the bats could be returned home to France. Finally, on the 24th March the bats were taken to France by Sheila Wright and David King, from Sussex Bat Group, where they were handed to a French Bat worker.

Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii* bats are slightly larger than the common and soprano pipistrelle bats *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and all three are found within England and France. In the UK *Nathusius'* pipistrelles are rare, with only around 650 records for the country.

For further information please contact the Bat Conservation Trust 0845 1300 228 or Norwich Bat Group: catherinegreenhough@hotmail.com.



Two of the *Nathusius'* pipistrelles

Photo © Catherine Greenhough