

United Kingdom Trip Report

Jake Barker

17/5 to 7/6 2025

About the author

My name is Jake, and I am a 25yr old ecologist, naturalist and amateur wildlife photographer from Australia. I have spent the last three years living and working in the Kimberley region of Western Australia and have recently moved to Perth where I will likely be based for the next few years. When I travel, it's usually to look for wildlife and I'm lucky to share this interest with my partner Jasmin, who also works as an ecologist in Australia.



To see more of my wildlife adventures or to get in contact, hit me up on Instagram at: <https://www.instagram.com/jake.b.wild/>

Intro

This report details the wildlife watching Jas and I did on a recent trip to the UK. The trip was mostly a family trip, but we squeezed in as much wildlife watching as we could. We managed to see 16 mammal species, 5 herps and 147 bird species – most of which were lifers!

This is the first of three trip reports, with the others detailing wildlife observed in Spain and Singapore.

For more details about birds, see our ebird report here:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/396013>

Mammals are highlighted in **blue** with other wildlife in **bold**.

See appendix for attempted (tentative) bat IDs – comments welcomed.

Day by Day

17/5 – 20/5

These four days were spent around London and consisted of a mixture of bulk lifers from our first ever birding in Europe and more touristy things.

Nature wise we visited Wanstead Park, Hampstead Heath and Regents Park. Non avian wildlife observed included **Grey Squirrel** (*Sciurus carolinensis*), **European Rabbit** (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), **Red Fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*), **Brown Rat** (*Rattus norvegicus*), **Pond Slider** (*Trachemys scripta*), and **Smooth Newt** (*Lissotriton vulgaris*). A short spotlight in Hampstead Heath also produced a **Tawny Owl**.



Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

23/5

Jas and I spent the day visiting Titchwell RSPB reserve knocking off more bird targets including our first **Dunlin** and **Common Snipe**. We saw a few **Brown Hare** (*Lepus europaeus*) on the drive there as well as numerous **European Rabbit**. There were heaps of **Muntjac Deer** (*Muntiacus reevesi*) around the reserve and we also found several **Common Shrew** (*Sorex araneus*) running around the boardwalk. We looked a little for **Water Vole** (*Arvicola amphibius*) but didn't have any luck.



Common Shrew (*Sorex araneus*)



Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*)



Muntjac Deer (*Muntiacus reevesi*)



Dunlin vs Little Ringed Plover

25/5

After seeing their mounds everywhere, it was both sad and interesting to see a dead **European Mole** (*Talpa europaea*) during a short walk around Castle Acre.



Recently deceased **European Mole** (*Talpa europaea*)

26/5

On route to York, Jas and I stopped into Frampton RSPB reserve and again spent several hours ticking off new birds. Highlights for us were getting onto a couple of straggler **Pink-footed Geese**, **Whooper Swan** and **Water Rail**. No new mammals were seen.

27/5

After spending the day exploring York, we decided to visit Strensall Common to look for **Eurasian Woodcock** and whatever else might be out at night. In the last light of the day, we had our first **Woodcock** fly over us peeping in a display flight. We had a few more flyovers the rest of the night and spotlighted one on the edge of a burn scar. Other observations included **Eurasian Nightjar**, **Common Toad** (*Bufo bufo*), **Common Frog** (*Rana temporaria*), and **Smooth Newt**. We briefly saw a couple of Deer, I believe they were Roe but couldn't confirm.

28/5

This was a highly anticipated day of the trip as we were visiting Bempton Cliffs and hoping to see **Atlantic Puffins**. Jas and I went early and visited Flamborough cliffs just down from Bempton and in minutes of arrival had 6 lifers basically all in one scope view (**Atlantic Puffin**, **Razorbill**, **Common Guillemot**, **Black-legged Kittiwake**, **Northern Fulmar** and **Northern Gannet**). We later met up with the rest of Jas's family at Bempton and spent the rest of the day in awe of the immensity of the cliffs and bird life of the area. As it got later Jas's family left and we stayed to try for **Western Barn Owl** and **Short-eared Owl**. Sadly, the **Short-eared Owl** hadn't been seen for a week or so and we had no luck, but we did manage to see a **Western Barn Owl** hunt and catch a **Vole sp** from a field! We then ducked back towards Flamborough and the lighthouse to check out some seals, ticking off **Grey Seal** (*Halichoerus grypus*) and **Roe Deer** (*Capreolus capreolus*).



Atlantic Puffin



Western Barn Owl carrying a **Vole sp**



Grey Seals (*Halichoerus grypus*)



Roe Deer (Capreolus capreolus)



The stunning Bempton Cliffs

30/5

We spent the day transiting to Haworth and Jas and I detoured to St Aidens RSPB reserve for some more birding. Highlights there were hearing (booming) and eventually seeing **Eurasian Bittern** doing feeding flights. Aswell as seeing **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Little Owl** and **Eared Grebe**. That evening at our accommodation we had the excitement of a **European Hedgehog** (*Erinaceus europaeus*) getting about outside our tent. This was a species I really wanted to see whilst in Europe so was pleased to tick it off. We saw the hedgehog a few more times over the next day or so.



Eurasian Bittern



European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)

31/5

That arvo we visited the Moors around Haworth and saw lots of **Willow Ptarmigan** and a **Merlin**. It was also cool to see shorebirds (**Eurasian Curlew** and **Common Snipe**) in very different habitat to what we are used to.



Willow Ptarmigan (Red Grouse)



Eurasian Curlew



Common Snipe

1/6

Transiting to the Lake District, Jas and I again broke up the journey with some birding. We visited Leighton Moss RSPB and Walney Island. Highlights were **Common Eider** and **Common Scoter**. There were some more **Grey Seal** at Walney and **Red Deer** (*Cervus elaphus*) seen from the road.



Common Eider

2/6

We spent the day celebrating Jas's bday! Doing a hike in the Lake District followed by finding one of Jas's most desired birds – a **White-throated Dipper**!



White-throated Dipper

3/6

Before departing the Lakes District, Jas and I paid an early morning visit to St Bee's Head RSPB reserve, hoping to see **Black Guillemot**. We were unsuccessful but had more views of **Puffins**, **Razorbills**, **Guillemots** etc. We then rendezvoused with Jas's family at Eskrigg Reserve, which we had been tipped had a great hide for **Red Squirrel** (*Sciurus vulgaris*). Arriving a little late in the morning and with some rain setting in, we didn't have any luck sadly.

Arriving to our accommodation near Drymen, I was excited when we found a couple of **Palmate Newts** (*Lissotriton helveticus*) in the backyard pond.



Palmate Newt (Lissotriton helveticus)

With a huge target remaining for Jas and I being **Red Squirrel**, we plotted a visit to Queen Elizabeth Forest Park where there appeared to be some more hides with a good chance of success. Arriving earlyish this time we were rewarded instantly with three **Red Squirrel** feeding and scurrying around the area. We watched for a couple of hours with heaps of birds and at least six different **Red Squirrels** coming down to the feeders over that time. Satisfied, we left and walked around a trail in the reserve, and I was pleased when I spotted a **Red Squirrel** up in a tree (a long way away from any feeders which felt more authentic). We then set our sights on our next target which was **Black Grouse**. We decided to try the upland trail at Inversnaid RSPB but sadly had no luck, though we did spy some **Red Deer** in the distance and got a flash of a **Dipper**. We headed back to Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, hoping to see a **European Badger** (*Meles meles*) but found very little during an hour or so of spotlighting.



Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)



Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*)

6/6

Today was our last day in Scotland and so we were determined to try our best to see a couple more of our targets. We set off early in the morning to try Braes of Foss for **Black Grouse**, but sadly were unsuccessful again, we did see some **Common Snipe** doing their winnow calls which was quite cool. We spent the arvo/evening in Perth where we were hoping to find some **Eurasian Beaver** (*Castor fiber*). **Beavers** were illegally reintroduced to the River Tay in the early 2000s but have since been accepted as a protected species (with some controversy it seems). From my research it seemed there should be **Beavers** even in the middle of the city, so we spent the arvo exploring around North Inch and Moncrieffe Island. We found evidence of **Beavers** quickly with their gnaw marks in many of the trees along the river edge but after a couple of hours still hadn't seen one. I wasn't sure the best strategy to look for them and was torn between sitting and waiting or walking along the edge of the bank. With hindsight I think the latter is probably best. Close to sunset we finally spotted a pair of **Beavers** on the far side of the river around here 56.411652, -3.431696. Their burrow was also relatively obvious. Success! and an exciting way to end our time in the UK before flying to Spain for the next leg of the trip!



Gnawing from [Eurasian Beaver](#) (*Castor fiber*)



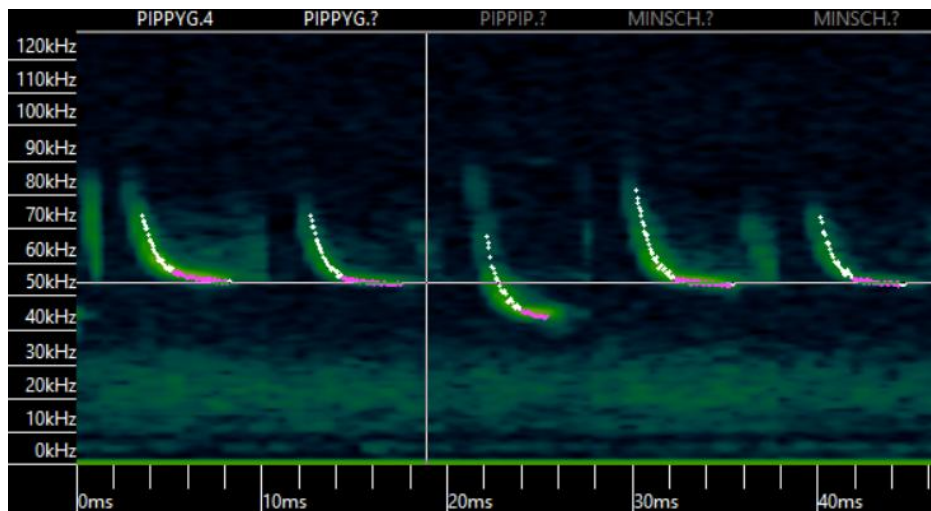
[Eurasian Beaver](#) (*Castor fiber*)

Appendix

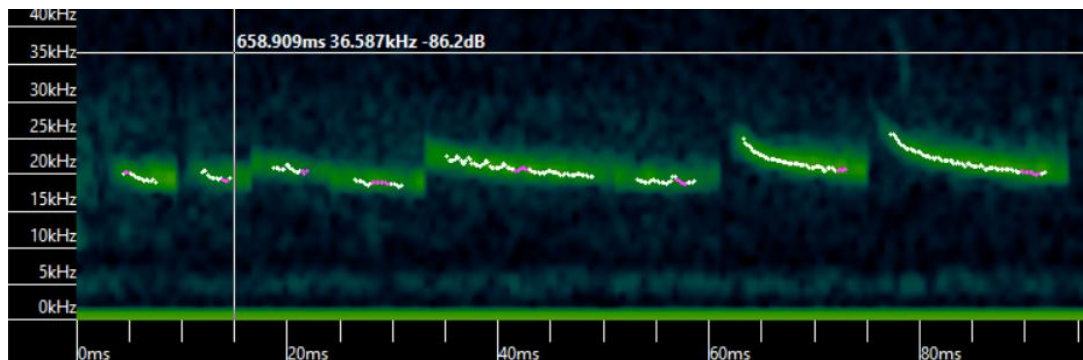
Bats

I've provided below a couple of screenshots of sonograms where I have attempted ID on bats I observed in the field. I'm very new to use of my echometer, bat ID, autoID etc so very much appreciate any feedback on my attempted IDs. I regret not trying to observe and record physical and flight characteristics of bats and will endeavour to do this more in the future to increase confidence in IDs.

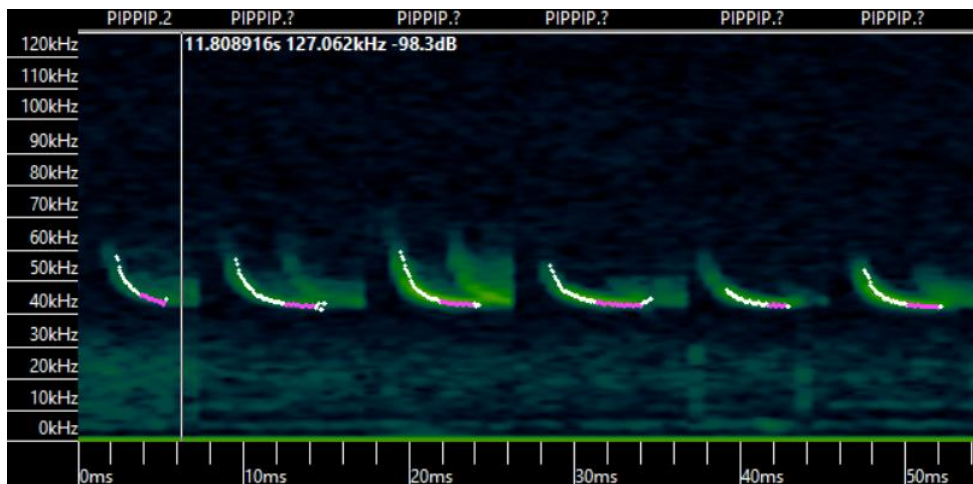
18/5/2025 Hampstead Heath



Soprano Pipistrelle – ID based on fm-qCF calls greater than 4ms in length with Fc higher then 53 (54)

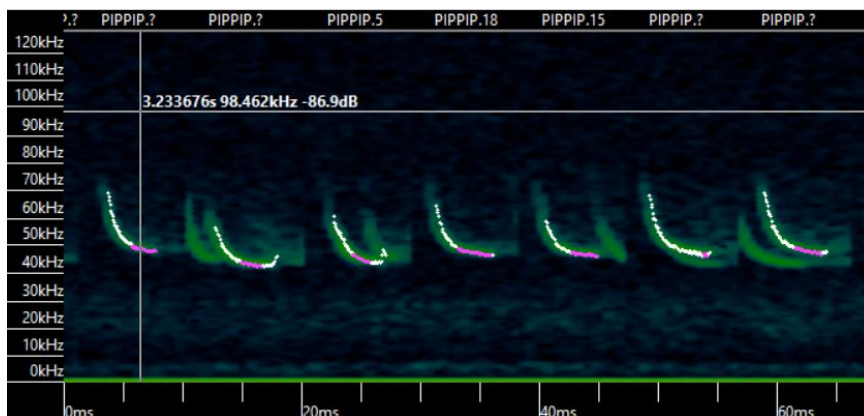


Noctule – ID based on Fc being comfortably below 21khz and plip plop sequence



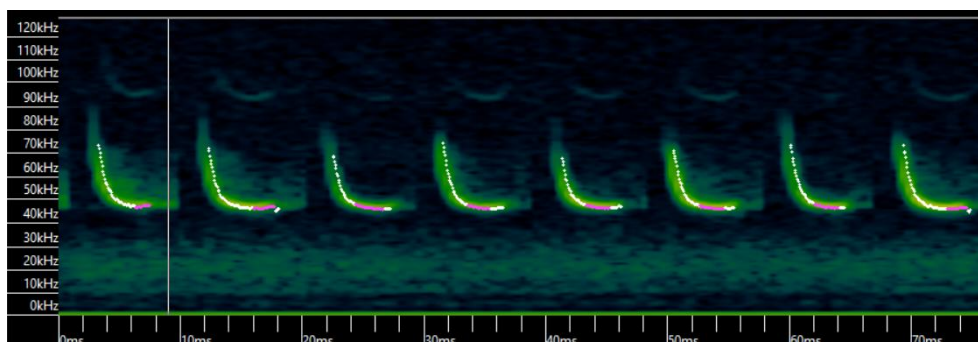
Common Pipistrelle/ Nathusius's Pipistrelle – ID not definitive for PIPPIP as call duration is greater than 7ms but Fc is almost exactly 43kHz on the edge of characteristic, though likely PIPPIP. Interested to know if this call can be definitively ldd and if so based on what?

27/5/2025 Strensall Common

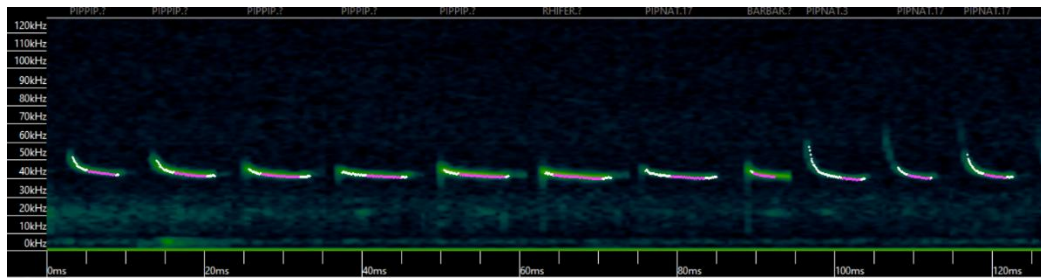


Common Pipistrelle – ID based on pulse duration longer than 4ms and Fc greater than 45 but less than 50 (Fc was 46 for a selected 7 pulse sequence).

30/05/2025 Haworth



Common Pipistrelle – ID based on calls longer than 4ms and Fc between 45-50 (Fc was 46.7)



Nathusius's Pipistrelle? – Suspected PIPNAT but not quite definitive with the Fc being a scratch above 40?

References used for bat ID

Marckmann U, Pfeiffer B (2020). Analysis of Bat Call Recordings and Criteria for the Evaluation of Acoustic Identification of Species.

Russ J (2021). *Bat calls of Britain and Europe: A guide to species identification*.

Overall Mammal+Herp List

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sightings
Eurasian Beaver	Castor fiber	two seen in the River Tay, Perth
Red Squirrel	Sciurus vulgaris	~6 seen at Queen Elizabeth Forest Park
Grey Squirrel	Sciurus carolinensis	Basically everywhere
European Hedgehog	Erinaceus europaeus	1 seen near Haworth
Brown Hare	Lepus europaeus	numerous seen
European Rabbit	Oryctolagus cuniculus	Everywhere
Brown Rat	Rattus norvegicus	seen on a few occasions, especially around London
Common Shrew	Sorex araneus	10+ seen around the boardwalk at Titchwell RSPB reserve
Red Fox	Vulpes vulpes	Many places
Grey Seal	Halichoerus grypus	Flamborough and Walney Island
Red Deer	Cervus elaphus	A few sightings, mostly in Scotland
Reeves Muntjac	Muntiacus reevesi	Many seen around Norfolk
European Roe Deer	Capreolus capreolus	Seen on a few occasions, including around Bampton
Noctule	Nyctalus noctula	Hampstead Heath
Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	Likely recorded many places
Soprano Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pygmaeus	Likely recorded many places
European Mole*	Talpa europaea	Castle Acre
Pond Slider	Trachemys scripta	common around London
Common Frog	Rana temporaria	one seen Strensall Common
Common Toad	Bufo bufo	one seen Strensall Common
Palmate Newt	Lissotriton helveticus	Seen in a few ponds in Scotland
Smooth Newt	Lissotriton vulgaris	Seen a few times down south including Wanstead Park

Bird List

Atlantic Puffin	Eurasian Wigeon	Song Thrush
Bank Swallow	Eurasian Woodcock	Stock Dove
Barn Swallow	Eurasian Wren	Tawny Owl
Barnacle Goose	European Goldfinch	Tree Pipit
Black-bellied Plover	European Greenfinch	Tufted Duck
Black-headed Gull	European Herring Gull	Water Rail
Black-legged Kittiwake	European Pied Flycatcher	Western Barn Owl (Eurasian)
Black-tailed Godwit (Icelandic)	European Robin	Western Cattle-Egret
Brant	European Starling	Western House-Martin
Canada Goose	European Stonechat	Western Marsh Harrier
Carrion Crow	Gadwall	Whinchat
Cetti's Warbler	Goldcrest	White Wagtail
Coal Tit	Gray Heron	White-throated Dipper
Common Buzzard	Gray Wagtail	Whooper Swan
Common Chaffinch	Graylag Goose	Willow Ptarmigan (Red Grouse)
Common Chiffchaff	Great Black-backed Gull	Willow Warbler
Common Cuckoo	Great Cormorant	Yellowhammer
Common Eider (Eurasian)	Great Crested Grebe	
Common Greenshank	Great Spotted Woodpecker	
Common Gull	Great Tit	
Common Kingfisher	Greater Whitethroat	
Common Merganser	Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)	
Common Murre	Hooded Crow	
Common Nightingale	House Sparrow	
Common Pochard	Lesser Black-backed Gull	
Common Raven	Little Egret	
Common Redshank	Little Grebe	
Common Redstart	Little Owl	
Common Reed Warbler	Little Ringed Plover	
Common Ringed Plover	Little Stint	
Common Sandpiper	Little Tern	
Common Scoter	Long-tailed Tit	
Common Shelduck	Mallard	
Common Snipe	Mandarin Duck	
Common Swift	Manx Shearwater	
Common Tern	Marsh Tit	
Common Wood-Pigeon	Meadow Pipit	
Curlew Sandpiper	Mediterranean Gull	
Dunlin	Merlin	
Dunnock	Mistle Thrush	
Eared Grebe	Mute Swan	
Egyptian Goose	Northern Fulmar	
Eurasian Bittern	Northern Gannet	
Eurasian Blackbird	Northern Lapwing	
Eurasian Blackcap	Northern Pintail	
Eurasian Blue Tit	Northern Shoveler	
Eurasian Bullfinch	Osprey	
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Pied Avocet	
Eurasian Coot	Pink-footed Goose	
Eurasian Curlew	Razorbill	
Eurasian Jackdaw	Red Kite	
Eurasian Jay	Red Knot	
Eurasian Kestrel	Red-breasted Merganser	
Eurasian Linnet	Red-legged Partridge	
Eurasian Magpie	Redpoll	
Eurasian Moorhen	Reed Bunting	
Eurasian Nightjar	Ring-necked Pheasant	
Eurasian Nuthatch	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	
Eurasian Oystercatcher	Rook	
Eurasian Siskin	Rose-ringed Parakeet	
Eurasian Skylark	Ruddy Turnstone	
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	Ruff	
Eurasian Spoonbill	Sanderling	
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Sandwich Tern	
Eurasian Treecreeper	Sedge Warbler	