

'Olympian' bat's flight offers climate change clues

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

A tiny bat that flew 2,018 kilometers (1,254 miles) from Britain to Russia is being hailed as a mini-Olympian by scientists who hope her flight will teach them more about how climate change is affecting the

species.

The Nathusius' pipistrelle was found in a village in the Pskov region of northwestern Russia, according to the U.K.'s Bat Conservation Trust. The bat, which weighed eight grams (0.28 ounces) and was about the size of a human thumb, had been ringed by a bat recorder near London's Heathrow Airport in 2016.

Unfortunately, the creature had been attacked by a cat and later died, despite the efforts of Russian conservationists.

"This is a remarkable journey and the longest one we know of any bat from Britain across Europe," said Lisa Worledge, head of conservation services at the Bat Conservation Trust. "What an Olympian!"

The Nathusius' pipistrelle is found across Europe from the U.K. to Asia Minor. But recent studies suggest that some bats are now spending the winter further north than in the past and that their numbers are increasing in the British Isles.

Researchers believe this range expansion [is linked to climate change](#), and the trust is working with citizen scientists to study migration journeys and better understand this impact.

The bat's journey from Britain to Russia is one of the longest on record and the only long distance movement of this scale reported from west to east, the [trust](#) said. Most of the recorded flights involve bats that flew southwest from Latvia.

The record belongs to a Nathusius' pipistrelle that migrated all the way from Latvia to Spain in 2019, a distance of 2,224 kilometers (1,382 miles).

"This is very exciting," said Brian Briggs, who ringed the London bat. "It's great to be able to contribute to the international [conservation](#) work to protect these extraordinary animals and learn more about their fascinating lives."

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