



Olympian Bat

Why in News

Recently, a **bat** amazed the scientists by **flying a distance of more than 2,000 km** from **London to the Pskov region in northwestern Russia**. The bat is dubbed as the **“Olympian bat”** and has generated keen interest in **climate scientists**.

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The 'Olympian' bat's journey

The bat flew a distance of 2,018 km from London, UK to the Pskov region in northwestern Russia.



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Key Points

- The bat belongs to the **Nathusius' pipistrelle species of bats**.
- The journey is significant because it is the **longest one undertaken by a bat from Britain across Europe**.
- Bats belonging to the Nathusius' pipistrelle species **typically weigh less than 10 grams**.
 - They are known to **migrate from summer breeding grounds in northeastern Europe to warmer areas of the continent** where they **hibernate** in trees in buildings.

- The 'Olympian' bat's record is topped by **another bat from the same species** that **flew from Latvia to Spain in 2019** covering a distance of 2,224 km.
- For climate scientists, the journey is a window into **studying bat migration and its connection with climate change**.
- **Increased variation in climatic extremes** raises the **possibility of bats emerging from hibernation early** or at a greater frequency.
 - That would not only put hibernating bats at risk from depleted energy stores, but could also affect the birth and survival of pups.
- Thus, Nathusius' pipistrelle's range expansion is **linked to climate change** and **future changes in climate** will further impact this species.
- The **Bat Conservation Trust** launched a project called the **National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project** in 2014.
 - The project aims to **improve understanding of the ecology, current status and conservation threats** for Nathusius' pipistrelles in Great Britain.
 - One of the goals of this project is to **determine the migratory origins of this species of bats** since they might help in understanding its links to climate change.
 - There is already some evidence of **birds migrating early because of a warming planet**.
- **IUCN status** of Nathusius' pipistrelle species of bats: **Least concern**.

Hibernation

- It is an **inactive state resembling deep sleep** in which certain animals **living in cold climates pass the winter**.
- In hibernation, the **body temperature is lowered and breathing and heart rates slow down**.
- It protects the animal from cold and **reduces the need for food** during the season when food is scarce.
- Normally, **Polar bears, Rodents, and Bats** are some animals that show hibernation.
- Recently, a new research in **zebrafish** has demonstrated how **induced hibernation (torpor)** may protect humans from the elements of space, especially radiation, during space flight.

Source: IE

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