

Batty weather plays havoc with pipistrelle



BUDDY: Lunch is here for this tiny pipistrelle bat rescued by Martin.

THIS tiny little critter is getting some much needed TLC at a Nether Alderley wildlife sanctuary after dropping from its parent's perch.

The infant pipistrelle bat, which is less than one centimetre long, is being hand reared by Martin Turner at the South Manchester Wildlife Sanctuary.

He believes his latest arrival could be a casualty of the inclement weather, which has seen one of the wettest Julys on record.

"We have had an unusually high number of bats this year which have been found on the floor

by Katrina McKeever

having fallen from their perches. One theory is that they are being abandoned because of a shortage of food brought on by the weather.

"Bats need to eat around 2,000 to 3,000 midges per day to stay alive and with the very hard rain that we have seen over the past two months, they have not been as abundant as usual.

"We are hoping to release them soon, as long as we get a spell of good weather and we can be confident they have a good chance of making it by

themselves.

"Until then, we are feeding them with a cotton wool bud."

Smallest

Although its numbers are declining, the pipistrelle is the smallest and most common of Britain's 14 species of bat and all are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

A far cry from their much maligned vampire bat cousins, these little horrors can hope to grow to just three to five centimetres long, with a wingspan of 19 to 25 centimetres.