

Equipment review:

Anabat Walkabout detector / Anabat Insight sound analysis software

As the name suggests, the **Anabat Walkabout** is designed for hand-held use in the field with several handy features designed for carrying out walked transects and convenient processing of the data. Recording mode options are full spectrum .wav files for highest quality, or zero crossing for more economical data capture. Recording in the field is simple to activate once you've identified the relevant button in the functions buttons along the bottom of the screen, and can be set to Auto or Manual saving of triggered recordings. Files are GPS-tagged enabling records to be plotted on a map. Settings (for capturing and triggering recordings, rendering calls audible, and viewing information on the screen) can be adjusted according to preference and saved as individual profiles for different users and/or survey requirements.

The screen is largely taken up by a very clear spectrogram display which enables live viewing of the bat call sequences as they are being detected. Using your fingers to zoom in or out on the screen will bring up F1 – F10 buttons (familiar to Analook users) enabling you to zoom the calls in or out as you prefer.

A range of audio options are offered for making bat calls audible in the field and can easily be selected by opening your profile and clicking the Audio button. My favourite audio option is Auto Heterodyne which gives a heterodyne output which automatically tunes to the peak frequency of any sound being picked up. This mode also has a handy visual component in the form of a horizontal line on the screen which moves up and down the frequency scale to indicate the peak frequency being detected. Combined with the live spectrograms this gives a lot of useful information to help you identify the bat while in the field. One thing that requires caution (as with all devices that offer live spectrograms) is to not get so transfixed by the screen that you miss important visual clues through not observing the bat itself!

There are several other useful functions including a handy notes function which enables you to capture temperature, location and lux readings and record voice memos.

I found this device very easy to use in the field. It has a wrist strap and hand strap making it comfortable to carry and difficult to drop but prolonged use on a cold night left me with stiff and achy fingers so changing hand from time to time is recommended! The battery life seems very good – it only went down by about 10% over the course of one 90 minute session.

The Anabat Walkabout retails at around £1600.

Anabat Insight sound analysis software has been developed alongside the Anabat Walkabout and can be downloaded free of charge from www.titley-scientific.com/uk/anabat-insight.html. The free version only works with files from Anabat detectors. It retains many features of Analook so anyone familiar with that program will find it particularly easy to get to grips with. There are various improvements over Analook, a key one being that you can view full spectrum .wav files. I also found the species labelling buttons easier to use. As with Analook you can click on these buttons in order to label files

with the relevant species (multiple labels can be applied to each file). When you view files you have previously looked at it is clear which labels are applied as those species label buttons are highlighted. If you spot that a label has been applied in error or you change your mind about the ID you can click the button again to remove that label from the file.

Anabat Insight also offers automated call ID functionality with the BatClassify program (developed at Leeds University) as a plug-in. This is easy to enable which adds a BatClassify “Run” button at the bottom of the screen. This can be clicked to generate an automated species call identification for the file currently open. As with all auto ID programs some caution is needed with accepting the identifications it gives you. I found it to be accurate in identifying pipistrelles to species but, as expected, identifications of the trickier *Myotis* species appear to be less reliable (a call sequence from a bat observed foraging low over water like a Daubenton’s bat was identified as most likely to be whiskered/Brandt’s bat).

One of the handiest features of Anabat Insight is the “Generate Reports” tool. This gives a number of reporting options including the ability to generate a KML map which will open Google Earth and plot your records on the map complete with species labels, a really speedy way to complete a task which can normally involve fiddling around with two or more different programs in order to get the desired result.

Overall the Anabat Walkabout and Insight software make an excellent package for carrying out transect surveys and quickly outputting results.

Philip Briggs