



C.O.G.nizance

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The March meeting will be held somewhere in Carlsbad, New Mexico on Saturday—March 15th at probably Lucy's Mexican Restaurant at 7:30 p.m.—Come on out and join us on our restoration trip to Carlsbad Caverns!!



To show how severe the drought is here, I have never in the past 20 years doing bat count see this pool dry! Jester cave, Duane.



Gathering samples to check for WNS



Duane and Big Ear Bat in Jester

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Northwest trips are scheduled the third Saturday of every month. Contact Sue or John Bozeman for details.
 *The March meeting of the Central Oklahoma

Grotto will be held in Carlsbad, New Mexico. It will be on March 15, 2014.
 * Carlsbad Cavern clean up trip. Saturday, March 15th. Check with Duane for more details.

National White-Nose Syndrome Decontamination Protocol - Version 06.25.2012

The fungus *Geomyces destructans* (*G. d.*) is the cause of white-nose syndrome (WNS), a disease that has devastated populations of hibernating bats in eastern North America. Since its discovery in New York in 2007, WNS has spread rapidly through northeastern, mid-Atlantic, and Midwest states and eastern Canada. It continues to threaten bat populations across the continent. For the protection of bats and their habitats, comply with all current cave and mine closures, advisories, and regulations on the federal, state, tribal, and private lands you plan to visit. In the absence of cave and mine closure policy, or when planned activities involve close/direct contact with bats, their environments, and/or associated materials, the following decontamination procedures should be implemented to **reduce the risk of transmission** of the fungus to other bats and/or habitats. For the purposes of clarification, the use of the word "decontamination," or any similar root, in this document entails both the 1) cleaning and 2) treatment to disinfect exposed materials.

Under no circumstances should clothing, footwear, or equipment that was used in a confirmed or suspect WNS-affected state or region be used in a WNS-unaffected state or region. Some state/federal regulatory or land management agencies have supplemental documents¹ that provide additional requirements or exemptions on lands under their jurisdiction.

I. TREATMENTS TO REDUCE RISK OF TRANSFERRING *GEOMYCES DESTRUCTANS*2:

Applications/Products:

The most universally available option for treatment of submersible gear is:

Submersion in Hot Water: Effective at sustained temperatures $\geq 50^{\circ}\text{C}$ (122°F) for 20 minutes

Secondary or non-submersible treatment options (for a minimum of 10 min.) include:

PRODUCTS: **Clorox® (6% HOCl) Bleach**
 Lysol® IC Quaternary Disinfectant Cleaner
 Professional Lysol® Antibacterial All-purpose Clean

ENJOY CARSBAD, THOSE OF US WHO DIDN'T GET TO GO SURE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THE TRIP!

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO

Minutes of the February 14, 2014 meeting

Host: the home of COG member John and J.T. Van Dyke

Attendees: Anne Ault, Dale Amlee, John and Sue Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, John Talbot, Dale and Carol Town, John and J.T. Van Dyke, Jon and Kelley Woltz, and The Skillful Ogre

Supremo Jon Woltz began the meeting at 8:05 ("One Nation, One People, One Woltz")

OLD BUSINESS

- For our trip to Carlsbad in March seven members have requested going. We can take a maximum of eight people.
- We talked about the upcoming bat count.
- We talked about WNS appearing just east of the Oklahoma-Arkansas border. We are worried.

NEW BUSINESS - none

TREASURER'S REPORT

World Esteemed Treasurer John Talbot gave his treasurer's report.

We concluded the meeting at 8:30 🍷

TREASURER'S REPORTS

MARCH'S REPORT WILL BE IN THE APRIL NEWSLETTER.

TRIP REPORT

Trip Report: No count; Jester recon mission instead

Date: February 21, 2014

Cavers: JT, Cole Talbot, John VanDyle

Written by John VanDyke

Jester bat count didn't happen this weekend due to circumstances beyond the control of even the most experienced cavers. Duane had an emergency and I missed his email because of working the large Air Traffic Control job announcement at work. What follows is a report of the LRP (that's long range patrol for you civilian types) conducted instead.

Resurgence:

We (JT, Cole Talbot, and me) arrived at the meeting point a little before 10:00 am. About 1/2 hour later I decided to check my email to see if something had changed -- it had (sorry to hear about the mom, Duane). I considered calling it off then, but decided to see how the 2 teens would do. We donned the rest of our gear and started the "patrol", headed for the south entry point (Resurgence).

Omen #1: At the point in the overland trip where we veer west to get to the ravines, I noticed the lack of cattle paths. In years past there was always a couple leading to the north tips of the ravines. It seemed odd and would be a precursor of things to come.

Omen #2: We reached the corner where the ravine meets the waterway from the cave -- you know the place -- where the tree on the west helps us skirt the bank so we don't have to wade through the standing pool. Well, the pool wasn't a pool. In its place was a riot mob of dry leaves. No water. Nada.

Omen #3: We passed the "archway" and entered the south end of the cave. JT, who was bringing up the rear, blurted out, "Hey dad, look!" At the tip of his boot was a flesh-less, bleached white, rodent skull staring us down. Now, it's not odd to find animal bones in the caves, but this one made me think of a pirates flag. Niiiiiiice.

We tried to take a temperature reading but for some reason the thermometer kept reading 22C. We kept moving and began seeing single and small groups of Myotis. We finally found our first significant "mat" and I began computing a packing rate. It was at this point that I decided an actual count wasn't feasible; the teens weren't consistent in estimating the approximate sizes of the groups. I'm not faulting them at all, this just comes with experience. Instead, I focused their attention on observing the environment and looking for possibly infected bats.

First observation: we traveled in about 150 yards but did not see a single dead bat on the cave floor. I hope this is a good sign.

Second observation: We did see Pips (did I just call them that? Why yes yes I did). So I hope that's enough motivation for further trips into this wonderland.

Third observation: We looked closely at numerous groups and mats but did not detect any obvious signs of WNS. No, I'm not an expert. And no, I didn't stay at a Holiday Inn Express. However, there were no signs of white junk on the faces of the furry little friends. I hope this is confirmed when the "field test team" arrives on site.

Fourth observation: The bats were solidly in hibernation. No fliers. Little movement of any kind. The top of one mat surged a bit as we looked at them, but that was it. They all seemed blissfully in dreamland.

Fifth observation: We found no water anywhere. There was one area that was slightly damp, but it wasn't enough to cling to the treads on my boots.

We exited the same way we entered, about an hour later. When we crested the first hill we saw 3 young does gracefully gliding through the field. They saw us and didn't change their gentle lope one iota. They knew we slow humans were no match. A moment later, JT yelled, "Dad, an owl!". Sure enough, from the breakdown area between the arch and the entrance, a large owl emerged and flew to the nearest tree. It looked at us, scoffed, and flew way.

Train:

I told the teens we were going into Train to check it out. At first, they were more inclined to go home and eat or sleep. They suggested I go it alone. Ahhhh, the chance to teach! I reminded them that no one should cave alone. They seemed to remember this old but important axiom. I followed that up with some true motivation -- a choice! Go to the cave or walk home. I just love positive reinforcement. It works so well.

We drove up the road a ways and broached the jagged fence. After a short walk we were at Train entrance. There was a recently deceased bird of some kind at the cave mouth. We paid our respected and moved on.

The cave itself was dry, but that's not too unusual for Train. There weren't many bats, but there were a couple of Long Ears.

We exited the cave about 20 minutes after entering 🦇

Report: Jester Bat Count

Date: Sat. Mar. 1, 2014

Participants: Duane Del Vecchio, Carol Town, Dale Town

Report submitted by: Duane Del Vecchio

Well, it started as the bat count that almost didn't make it! Our original date of Feb. 15th was postponed due to John VanDykes schedule with his work then followed by Duane Del Vecchio having to leave the day before the Sat. Feb. 22nd to go to Dallas for his mom's surgery. The next weekend it looked like John going to be busy again with his job at FAA so we just decided we had to do it. Too many more weekends and they'll be out of hibernation and we couldn't do it! On top of that we got some vials to test for WNS on the bats and had to get those tests done and up to Dr. Caire in UCO to ship off for analysis.

But no problem... Saturday was going to be mid 60's before the bottom fell out for an expected ice storm that night (and it came for sure!). But Saturday morning came and it was a north wind about 25 mph and about 40 degrees and misting rain.... Oh boy.... Missed that forecast!

Duane was first on the scene and soon followed by the Town car. We geared up and hiked down to the south entrance (resurgence). When we got to the entrance there was something I had never seen before... in all of my years of going into Jester, there is a small pool that you have to maneuver around to get into the start...it has ALWAYS been full of water.... This year bone dry!! Wow... welcome to drought stricken Oklahoma!

We had to go to the first bend in the cave before we started seeing any bats. It was 45 degrees in the air and rock was 40 with an 80% humidity at this point. Not a lot of mats this year... but a lot of small groups. When we did get a packing rate it was at 224 sq. ft. (16x14). When we got to the pip room, (called that because it is usually warmer and has the pips in it.... Err... not pip... Tricolor... geez... these name changes!) we found a few pips but lots of 1's and 2's of Myotis there... 46 degrees with 83% humidity. We went down Pip hall but didn't find by 3 pip and 1 myotis. Hit the end of that section that we do bat count and headed back into the main passage to do the swabs now that we knew where our best groups would be... what we mean by best groups... THOSE WE COULD GET TO! <grin>

Carol was in charge of getting the vials open, swabs out and soaked in the ionized water then do the actual swabbing of the upper and lower forearm and snout of at least 15 myotis. Dale got to be the collector of all of the data and keep us straight. Duane got the fun job of handling the bats with just protective examination gloves instead of nice thick ones to protect from bites! Duane would pull a wing from being tucked in, extend it, Carol would reach through and roll the swab over the top of the forearm 3 times, then under the same forearm 3 times and finally swab the nose before putting the tip back into the vial and breaking the swab off inside before sealing it up. During this time we were telling Dale what



number vial it was, single or group of Myotis, and sex of bat (if we could without pulling it off of the wall). We did 16 samples and packed it out and headed for the cars to go to Train Tunnel and Glade/Homestead entrance on the north side of the cave to continue the count in the traditional way.

Train Tunnel is usually not a great place for counts but we go there because it is one place where we can see long ears. This time there were only two bats in the area... both long ears!! But Duane had to make a selfie with one of them!



On ward to Homestead/Glade Entrances... we met the landowner and he gave us permission to drive down the road inside the gate! Whew! Thanks!!! Nice on this semi-winter day! We got the gate open and pulled around and right near the spot where we would pop back out. We went down into Homestead entrance, again, to just see if there were any long ears (3 of them), then used the connecting tunnel to appear in Glade. This is usually where we find the giant mats with thousands of bats... wow... only one mat... what's up?? Temp Air 42, Rock 44, Dirt (no water or mud) 40 and 66% humidity. The packing was 225 per sq ft. (15x15). Right down the tunnel we saw a long ear in this part of the cave... haven't ever seen that before either!! Lots of mini mats throughout this section of the cave... 1/2 by 1/2, 1/2 by 1, etc..... it was pretty nice though... no water, no mud, nice solid ground for once!! Then during this time we heard rumbling and looking around (thinking are we in an earthquake) Dale says while holding his stomach, "Sorry... it thinks it's time for a calzone!!" We wrapped up the rest of the cave and were out by 3:00 p.m. and on our way for the annual after bat count feast at Lugi's in Blair!! Thanks gang... was fun and educational at the same time!!

Final Count: Jester Cave System:
Cave Myotis (Myotis velifer) = 15,720; Tri-colored (Perimyotis subflavus) = 22; Western Big-eared bat (Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens) = 5



POTPOURRI

Cavers discover our deepest secret

By Steve Deane

Copied from the **New Zealand Herald**
http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11195138

It's taken more than 50 years but the deepest cave system in the Southern Hemisphere has been found - in New Zealand.

A group of Kiwi cavers, led by Kieran Mckay, worked their way through the final few piles of rubble in Kahurangi National Park on Wednesday to uncover the huge underground system within Mt Arthur.

Once the rubble was gone, Mr Mckay's party was able to connect the Nettlebed and Stormy Pot caves, turning the new cave system into a 36km long, 1200m deep underground labyrinth.

"It's hard to describe," Mr Mckay said of how he felt when he finally broke through to link up the Nettlebed and Stormy Pot systems. "When you have wanted something for so long and you get it, in some ways you are really elated.

"All that hard work by hundreds and hundreds of people - because this exploration goes back to the 60s - all of whom dreamed of finding a route from the top of the mountain to the bottom, suddenly we've done it," he said.

But it's like climbing a mountain peak for the first time. You climb one mountain and go 'yes I'm at the top'. But then you look around and go 'there are other mountains to climb'."

Nettlebed was discovered at the bottom of the mountain in the late 1960s and explored to a height of 800m and a length of 20km.

In 2011, Mr Mckay's group was sheltering from a severe storm when they discovered Stormy Pot, which was 15km long and 700m deep.

When Mr Mckay returned from that expedition he plotted both caves on a computer programme and realised he was looking at the same cave.

"That was an incredible moment. We were on the verge of getting a cave 1200m deep."

Finding a way to bridge the 150m gap between the caves wouldn't be easy. It took four trips over three years before fumes from a kerosene fire lit at Stormy Pot were smelled near a rockfall in Nettlebed, indicating the best place to attempt a link-up.

On a previous expedition, dye tipped into a creek in Stormy Pot had flowed into a creek in Nettlebed, confirming that the two caves were one.

The kerosene-fume expedition last year was funded by Red Bull Media, which made a documentary about it.

When the cavers returned this week, it took two hours of digging to complete the link and enter the cave into record books.

A lot of abseiling is required to pass through a system that varies from "brutally small shafts through to cham-

bers 50m high and two football fields long", and a large river also has to be negotiated.

The cavers spent between seven and 10 days underground on each expedition.

If a new entrance can be found further up Mt Arthur, the cave has the potential to extend to 1500m deep.

But it still won't rival the world's deepest cave - the 2197m deep Krubera Cave in Abkhazia, a breakaway region of Georgia in the Western Caucasus. 📷

TRAPPED CAVERS RESCUED

Reprint from **THE PRESS**

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/9808614/Trapped-cavers-rescued>

Explosives were used to smash through rock and free a Christchurch caving couple who were trapped for 16 hours in a virgin cave beneath Mt Arthur.

The pair were forced to spend Saturday night about 100 metres underground "snuggled deep under survival blankets in wet clothing" as the temperature dropped to about 5 degrees Celsius.

Experienced cavers Lindsay Main, 62, and Alice Shanks, 52, had been exploring the newly discovered Pillar Cave in Kahurangi National Park, near Nelson, with 16 other caving enthusiasts.

Main, who has been caving since the 1980s, became stuck after he wormed his way through a tiny passageway and was unable to get back through.

The squeeze was so tight he had to lie on one side and try to shuffle his way around a 90 degree corner to make it into the untouched cavern on the other side.

His wife and two other cavers also crawled through the squeeze, but managed to make it out again.

However, Main's height meant it was "difficult for him to get in and impossible for him to get out", Nelson Police search and rescue spokesman Malcolm York said.

When Shanks realised her husband was trapped, she crawled back into the cavern to hold vigil by his side - despite suffering a cracked rib earlier that day.

Their fellow cavers contacted police about 9pm and were able to pass through blankets, heat packs and food to help the couple make it through the night.

"The resourcefulness of the other cavers is what kept them alive," York said.

A specialized cave rescue team flew to Mt Arthur yesterday morning. The three-man team, from the Nelson Speleological Group (NSG), used miniature explosives to blast away a piece of rock about the size of a basketball to widen the passage for Main.

Dion Richards, from NSG, said the team had to navigate through 25 metres of "up and down crawly bits" before reaching the squeeze.

Using electronic detonation, they co-ordinated "very controlled" explosives to blast away a piece of rock that was obstructing Main's escape.

The rescued couple were flown to Nelson via helicopter and received minor medical treatment.

They spent last night in Nelson and were expected to return to Christchurch this week. 📷

Central Oklahoma Grotto is a non-profit organization and a chapter of the NSS (National Speleological Society), Cave Avenue, Huntsville, AL., 35810. Dedicated to cave conservation and safety, C.O.G. published general information in a monthly newsletter (\$6.00/year) and detailed cave surveys and related Speleological items in a yearly publication, *The Oklahoma Underground* (\$3-\$8/issue) Membership is by sponsor and is \$12 per year for adults, \$6 for spouses and students, and \$3 if under 18. Central Oklahoma Grotto meets once a month on the second Friday of each month. For information, write Lil Town, 25692 Mosier Circle, Conifer, CO 80433: All submissions to the newsletter should be sent to the editor: Lil Town, 25692 Mosier Circle, Conifer, CO 80433: Telephone: (580)471-1238: E-mail: cavemoose@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions for any particular month's issue is the 20th day of the previous month. If you wish material returned. Please include a SASE with submission. All materials in this newsletter is available for reproduction, provided proper credit is given with the article when you print it. Trade publications are welcomed. *Cave softly and safely!* Website: <http://www.okcavers.com>

***The March meeting will be
Somewhere in Carlsbad, New Mexico
March 15, 2014.***



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