CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC

C.O.G.nizance

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

*No trips are planned at this time.

***Next meeting is October 10, 2025 at 7:00 pm central time on Google Meet. Becky will send out invitations.**

The National White-nose Syndrome Decontamination Protocol (March 2024) outlines procedures to effectively clean and disinfect clothing, footwear, and equipment that may have been exposed to *Pd*, and can help reduce the risk of human-assisted spread of the fungus. The recommendations are based on the best available evidence to date.

Key changes to the current update compared to October 2020 include the following:
-Ethanol, Formula 409 and Hibiclens are removed from the approved disinfection product table.
-Isopropanol concentration is narrowed to 50-70%.the previous protocol, >50% isopropanol was approved.
-The WNS management areas map is updated to reflect the current status of Pd and WNS occurrence in the US. Hawai'i, Alaska, and Puerto Rico are added to the map of management areas.
- Guidelines for movement of gear and when to decontaminate gear are stated in a bulleted list rather than a diagram.
-Additional information is provided regarding decontamination of mist-nets, harp traps and acoustic equipment.

from https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/mmedia-education/national-wns-decontamination-protocol-u-s

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO MEETING
SEPTEMBER 12, 2025

ATTENDING: **Dale Amlee, Sue Bozeman, Becky Hunsinger—virtual meeting facilitator, Duane Del Vecchio, John Talbot, Lil Town, Carol and Dale Town, Tammy, John and Andrew Van Dyke, Jon Woltz, Steve Beleu**

PRESIDING: Jon Woltz
START: 8:07

OLD BUSINESS – none

NEW BUSINESS – John Van Dyke talked about grant he can procure for us that will make testing for WNS feasible when we do our annual bat count in Jester Cave. We will need to send notice of our bat count dates and results to our grant source, and comply with some of their minimal requirements. Can do, will do.

TREASURER'S REPORT

September 2025 TREASURER'S REPORT

INCOME		EXPENSES
Dividends	$ 0.17	
TOTAL	**$ 0.17**	
CASH	$ 6.05	
CHECKING	**$ 300.57**	
SAVINGS	**$ 1235.25**	**PREPARED BY TREASURER**
		JOHN TALBOT NSS #30254
TOTAL	**$ 1541.88**	
10/9/2025		

TRIP REPORTS

No trip reports this month

POTPOURRI

China's 'heavenly pits': The giant sinkholes that have ancient forests growing within

By Sascha Pare published May 24, 2024

Xiaoxhai Tiankeng: the world's biggest sinkhole

China's southwestern karst landscape is pockmarked with dozens of enormous sinkholes that look like they were made with a cookie cutter — and scientists keep finding new ones.

It was only "discovered" by the outside world in 1994, and experts still aren't sure how it formed.

Peering down from outer space at the rolling green landscape of south-western China's rural Chongqing Municipality, a series of deep, dark gashes appear, denting the land like an alien footprint.

It was only "discovered" by the outside world in 1994, and experts still aren't sure how it formed.

Some experts wonder whether these mysterious formations are the result of a meteorite crashing into the Earth. Others believe they gradually formed over some 128,000 years, as water seeping into underground rivers slowly carved the surrounding limestone rock on its journey.

But one thing is for certain: measuring 660m deep, with a volume of 130 million cubic metres, China's Xiaoxhai Tiankeng is both the deepest and largest sinkhole in the world.

Tiankeng means the "The Heavenly Pit", and its sheer sides plummet to a veritable netherworld that's home to a thriving ecosystem of some 1,285 plant and animal species – including the rare gingko and clouded leopard. Aside from its vast size, the formation is also unique in that it's a double-nested sinkhole holding two craters joined by a sloping edge. In the rainy season, a waterfall cascades from the mouth of the pit, feeding an underground river and cave network at its base.

While locals have known about the sinkholes for centuries, it was only "discovered" by the outside world in 1994, when British explorers attempted to survey its maze-like underground cave system. Despite attempting to map the underground river five times in a 10-year period, speleologists found the gushing torrent too difficult to navigate and the team never succeeded. As a result, this deep, dark underworld remains one of China's great geological mysteries.

1,500TH BAT SPECIES DISCOVERED IN AFRICA'S EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Breakthrough marks global milestone in biodiversity.

09.30.25

Austin, Texas (Sept 30, 2025) – A new bat species was discovered on Bioko Island in Africa's Equatorial Guinea, officially marking the 1,500th unique bat species known in the world today. *Pipistrellus etula* was discovered by Laura Torrent, PhD student at the BiBio Research Group, Natural Sciences Museum of Granollers (and former Bat Conservation International Student Scholar), and colleagues, while conducting a biodiversity assessment on the island.

About *Pipistrellus etula*

While doing her PhD in mainland Equatorial Guinea, Torrent was invited to participate in a Rapid Biodiversity Assessment funded by Conservation International. The team caught several individuals of a small pipistrelloid bat that didn't fit the description of any known species. After examining old and recent specimens, compiling morphological and molecular evidence, and collaborating with researchers from two

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continents, they were able to describe it as a new species for science. Although its existence has only been proven on Bioko Island, the research team suspects that the species may also be found in other mountains along the Cameroonian Volcanic Line.

The name, *Pipistrellus etula*, is an important homage to the island.

"Considering that many African bats were named after researchers from elsewhere, I am delighted to name *Pipistrellus etula* in honor of the inhabitants of Bioko Island, the Bubi," says Torrent. "It's their land where this tiny bat lives, so what better name for it than "*etula*", which means "island" and "god of the island" in the Bantu local language?"

Why is one more bat species important?

Discovery of a new bat species is an important milestone for conservation and biodiversity, as it indicates an ongoing expansion of knowledge and provides more accurate data for planning and action. As a baseline, knowing what species exist and the roles they play in global ecosystems is essential for formulating effective conservation strategies.

"Reaching 1,500 species is special because it showcases that scientific discovery is still happening," says Dr. Winifred Frick, Chief Scientist for Bat Conservation International (BCI). "Identifying these new species is important for setting priorities for conservation."

According to Torrent, you never know what new discoveries you'll find in a new area working with poorly-studied species.

"Each year, bats prove to be an endless source of fascinating interactions between themselves and with the ecosystems they inhabit," says Torrent. "From a bat researcher's perspective, it is not that hard to accept, considering they are the second-most-rich and the most ecologically diverse group of mammals. Who knows if *Pipistrellus etula* plays an important ecological role on Bioko Island or has a unique roosting strategy yet to be described? Now that we have found its existence, we can start developing all these captivating questions that will eventually lead us to mind-blowing discoveries."

In addition to the essential data new species provide for conservation planning, the discovery of a new species is a hopeful message to both the science community and citizens around the world.

"Every new species that we discover spurs us on," says Nancy Simmons, PhD, a BCI Board Member and Curator at the American Museum of Natural History. "In a world where biodiversity loss is becoming the norm, we're energized by the reality in front of us — that we're still in the age of discovery."

Dr. Simmons co-maintains the batnames.org website which serves as a taxonomic and geographic database for bat species around the world. She marvels at the number of bat species that have been discovered during her career — and the ones yet to be discovered.

"When I first started working on bats, 35 years ago now, there were only 925 species of bats recognized, says Dr. Simmons. "We've come a long way!"

Friday
October 10, 2025
There will be a virtual meeting.
See you online!

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