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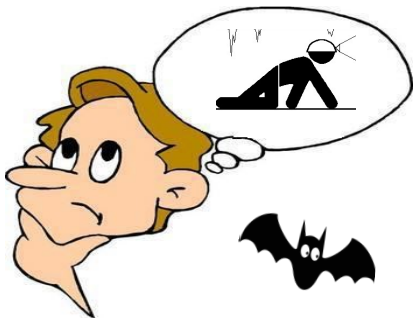
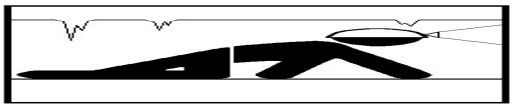
Inside this Issue

Honduran white bats Look Like Cotton Balls 1
Announcements 2
White-Nose Decontamination Protocol; Officers
Minutes: no minutes this month 2
Trip Reports:
No Trip Reports 2
Potpourri:
There are Pink 'Cotton Candy Caves' in Australia 2
European Space Agency Plans Mission to Explore Caves on the Moon.....3

NOT SURE WHEN THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE DUE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING. EVERY-ONE BE SAFE!





.Honduran White Bats Look Like Cotton Balls With Piggy Faces And They Sleep In Leaf Tents
August 5th, 2020
By Ashley Brewer, Contributor at Animal Channel
https://animalchannel.co/honduran-white-bats-fluffy-cotton-balls/

This particular bat is one that we find irresistibly adorable. You can spot them in the rainforests of the Caribbean coast of Honduras, eastern Costa Rica, and western Panama. What makes them super cool is that they build their own homes!

These talented bats spend their day using heliconia leaves to build tents for them to roost in. They'll cut along the ridges of the leaf using their teeth – this causes the leaves to fold downward, creating a little tent!

Sometimes you'll find a solo Honduran white bat hanging out underneath a leaf, but usually, they'll huddle in groups – sometimes over a dozen!

These leaf tents serve as the bats' tiny sanctuary. The shelter protects them from the scorching sun, heavy rains, and predators as well. The smart animals purposefully build these tents up high enough from the ground to stay clear of snakes and possums, but low enough under the rainforest canopy to hide from the owls.

What makes their adorable tents even more practical and convenient is the fact that these cutie pies only eat fruit, and lucky for them, the trees they live in are full of fruit so there is food right outside their door.

So, how big are these bats? Well, not big at all! They are teeny tiny at around 1.5- to 2-inches long and weigh just 0.18–0.21 oz.

You might be thinking that they must be the smallest bats on the planet, however, there is a smaller species out there. The Kitti's Hog-Nosed Bat takes that title at a length of 1.1 to 1.3 inches and weighing in at an itsy bitsy 0.071 oz.

Their white coats serve a special purpose as a form of camouflage for them. When the sun shines down on them sitting in their leaf tents, the white reflects their surroundings and appears just as green as the leaf!

Their noses and ears are bright orange due to large concentrations of carotenoids. According to Wikipedia, "[The Honduran white bat] is the first mammal known to have enough carotenoids in its skin to generate conspicuous color."

The tiny creatures aren't currently endangered, however, they are listed as 'near-threatened'.
Sadly, the biggest threat to these beautiful animals is humans. Rainforest destruction completely destroys their habitat, leaving them nowhere to go, no food, and often killing them in the process. The disappearance of these trees is happening at an alarming rate.

If you'd like to help keep the Honduran white bat population thriving, you can learn more about the current rainforest destruction, as well as donating or volunteering with conservation organizations.

Have we convinced you that bats aren't so bad after all? We hope so! These little guys are just too cool.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*No trips planned at the present time

*No meeting in March, 2021.

We have decided to keep the slate of officers for 2021 the same as last year's – namely:

JON WOLTZ —VICE CHAIRMAN
DALE AMLEE — CHAIRMAN
STEVE BELEU — RECORDING SECRETARY
SUE BOZEMAN — CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME DECONTAMINATION PROTOCOL, September 2018

This is the latest formal revision of the national decontamination protocol to prevent spread of the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome. This document is the product of a collaborative effort with multiple federal and state agencies and several non-governmental organizations. Go to this website to view the detailed suggestions listed to help stop the spreading of WNS
https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/static-page/decontamination-information

MINUTES

No minutes to publish this month.

POTPOURRI

There Are Pink 'Cotton Candy Caves' in Australia — and They're Absolutely Stunning

There are only two routes that will take you to the caves and they both require some hiking.

BY JESSICA POITEVIEN MARCH 10, 2021

https://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/pink-cotton-candy-caves-moonee-beach-australia

Australia is already known for its beauty and adventurous spirit, but now, a new natural phenomenon is trending and it's sending flocks of people just two hours north of Sydney.

Earning the nickname "cotton candy caves" thanks to its bright pink hue, these grottos — also known as the pink caves — are nestled in the Munmorah State Conservation Area, about 81 miles north of New South Wales' capital city, according to DailyMail.

Visitors can access these natural beauties via the Moonee Beach Trail, but only if they can manage the nearly two-and-a-half-mile return walk along the rocks. Tourists are also urged to only make the trek during low tide to avoid slipping on the rocks or being pummeled by waves.

Throughout the years, the forces of nature have split the ocean cave's platform, meaning the waves crash right in the middle. During low tide, waves rush through the split rock, quickly filling the gap before the tide takes the water back out. The draining of the cave is what exposes the bright pink and purple colors. It's also part of what makes the experience a bit dangerous if visitors aren't careful.

There are two routes that lead adventurers to the pink caves. The shorter trip takes about one and a half to two hours and involves accessing the caves via the northern end of Moonee Beach through the rock platforms on the coast.

The other route offers some scenic views that may make the longer walk worth the effort. It also takes visitors to the less-explored section of the colorful sea caves. For a bit more adventure, visitors can head to the Rainbow Caves at the northern end of Moonee Beach and over the headland toward Deep Cave Bay.

POTPOURRI

European Space Agency Plans Mission to Explore Caves on the Moon

FEBRUARY 26, 2021

https://scitechdaily.com/european-space-agency-plans-mission-to-explore-caves-on-the-moon/

Entering a lunar lava tube. The Moon's surface is covered by millions of craters, but it also hosts hundreds of very steep-walled holes known as pits. Like doorways to the underworld, photos of some pits clearly show a cavern beneath the Moon's surface, suggesting that they are 'skylights' into extensive lava tubes that can be as wide as New York's Central Park, and could extend for hundreds of kilometers. These tubes are thought to have formed during lava flows billions of years ago, when the Moon was still geologically active. Credit: Conor Marsh, University of Manchester

In a first step towards uncovering the Moon's subterranean secrets, in 2019 ESA asked for your ideas to detect, map, and explore lunar caves. Five ideas were selected to be studied in more detail, each addressing different phases of a potential mission.

Through these five Sysnova studies, three mission scenarios were developed – one to perform a preliminary scout of entry pits and underground caves from the Moon's surface, one to lower a probe into a pit and access the first part of a cave, and one to explore an underground lava tube using autonomous rovers.

"Although the studies were very different in topic and approach, they all provided great insight into potential technologies for exploring and investigating the geology of the Moon's subsurface," says Loredana Bessone, Technical Officer for the studies and Project Manager for ESA CAVES and PANGAEA, speaking soon after the results of the studies were presented. "It's been a fascinating journey, and a great opportunity for ESA to start looking into missions to explore lunar caves."

Bringing the ideas together with other ESA lunar exploration initiatives

As a combination that would give a maximum scientific return, teams behind two of the studies – one from the University of Würzburg and one from the University of Oviedo – were selected to take part in an ESA Concurrent Design Facility (CDF) study. Both focusing on the second mission scenario, the technologies that these teams have developed would allow a safe exploration and documentation of a lunar pit as well as a first peek inside the tunnels that a pit may lead to.

Kicking off this week, the CDF study is integrating the results of the studies Scarried out by these two teams with plans for ESA's European Large Logistics Lander (EL3) and Moonlight initiatives. Whilst EL3 is a lander designed to enable a series of ESA missions to the Moon, Moonlight aims to provide navigation and telecommunications capabilities for lunar exploration.

The University of Würzburg has been exploring the concept of lowering a probe using a tether to explore and characterize the entrance, walls and initial part of lunar lava tubes. These huge underground caverns are thought to have formed through lava flows billions of years ago.

Named Daedalus, the compact, spherical probe would be equipped with 3D lidar, stereo camera vision and an ability to move independently. By creating a 3D model of the inside of a lava tube, the probe could identify geological resources and seek out locations with stable radiation levels and temperature; this information could take us closer to building a human settlement on the Moon.

The University of Oviedo, meanwhile, has investigated deploying a swarm of small robots inside a cave. Working together with the University of Vigo and Alén Space, the focus of their research has been on overcoming the lack of sunlight – and therefore solar power – inside a cave, as well as how to transmit data from the robots to a rover on the Moon's surface.

The team's solution is to use a crane to lower the robots into a lava tube. Equipped with a solar panel, the rover would supply energy to the robots through the crane using a 'charging head' attached to the bottom of the crane. Being in sight of the robots, the charging head would supply energy wirelessly, as well as transmitting and receiving data.

Continuing the research, the CDF study will design a lunar caves mission lasting one lunar day (14 Earth days), starting from the deployment of EL3. Focusing on the second mission scenario, the CDF study will also specify the individual subsystems of such a mission and ensure that they would all be able to work together.

"The CDF study will investigate details such as the energy requirements of the mission, the path that could be taken from the landing site to the pit rim, and the power and data budgets for descending into and mapping the pit," explains Francesco Sauro, cave scientist, and planetary lava tube expert, as well as technical course director of ESA CAVES and PANGAEA. "It will also look at the interfaces between the rover and the robotic crane, as well as the crane and the Daedalus probe."

"Overall, the Sysnova and CDF studies are helping ESA to identify interesting technologies and develop roadmaps for the future. They are supporting the Agency to assess the feasibility of novel concepts for future missions."

Whilst the Moon's surface has been well documented by orbital spacecraft, it hides an underground world that remains a mystery. The shelter that lunar caves provide, as well as the access to water and other resources, could be vital for our future human or robotic exploration of the Moon. This makes these Sysnova studies – and the ensuing CDF study – a major step forward in achieving a lunar mission.

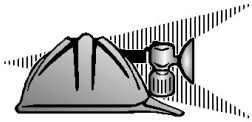
Discover more about each Sysnova study

The following videos, as well as the articles at the end of this page, were put together by the Sysnova study teams.

See the website for pictures and the video.

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**

No meeting is scheduled for March, 2020.
Be safe!



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