CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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Google Meet
Friday, February 10, 2023
At 8:00 central time
Becky will send you an invitation

Wow,
The first cave trip of the year! See you Friday evening online.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*No trips planned at the present time.

*Next meeting may be February 10, 2023 on Google Meet. Becky will send out invitations.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO MEETING
JANUARY 13, 2023

In attendance: Dale Amlee, Sue Bozeman, Becky Hunsinger—virtual meeting facilitator, John Talbot, Lil Town, Carol and Dale Town, John Van Dyke, Duane Del Vecchio, Kelley and Jon Woltz, and Steve Beleu.
Presiding: His Highness Dale Amlee
Start time: 8:05

OLD BUSINESS

1. Becky reported that the Carlsbad staff has replied positively to our offer to perform restoration work in the cave. We decided that the time period of May – June will work best for us. Carlsbad staffer Joan Garcia is our contact.
2. The list of current members had a wee few flaws in it in that it listed both current and former members. Sue will send out a final corrected list.

NEW BUSINESS

1. We virtually published the new Oklahoma Underground during the meeting! Duane did this as we watched! We have also printed several copies for the NSS and landowners.
2. The probable cavers for the January 14 cave trip the day after our meeting discussed the trip.
3. John Van Dyke reported that he took a Boy Scout troop to Alabaster Caverns State Park in March to clean up Alabaster Cavern.
4. Duane reported that there is currently no federal, state, or university bat programs coordinator in our state at this time. He also noted that any entry we make to any Oklahoma cave should abide by established protective protocols. We discussed those protocols.
5. We will volunteer to conduct a bat count on possibly February 4. John Van Dyke is our lead officer.

TREASURER'S REPORT –
John Talbot wasn't in attendance to deliver his report.
Meeting ended 9:00

Report by S. Beleu, Secretary and Sergeant at Underarms

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

Wildlife Health Bulletin 2022-01
National Wildlife Health Center
Jonathan Sleeman, Center Director
January 31, 2022

Winter 2021/2022 Bat Submission Guidelines and Highlights of the 202/2021 White-Nose Syndrome Surveillance Season

Summary

The USGS National Wildlife Health Center has released updated guidance for bat diagnostic submissions for the 2021/2022 white-nose syndrome (WNS) surveillance season.

During the 2020/2021 surveillance season, WNS was detected for the first time in Wyoming and Montana, increasing the number of states where WNS has been confirmed to 37.

Field testing of several vaccine candidates to prevent WNS in susceptible bat species is ongoing, and field vaccination has proven to be safe in WNS susceptible animals.

Updated guidance from the USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) is now available for bat diagnostic submissions for the 2021/2022 white-nose syndrome (WNS) surveillance season. These guidelines are posted on the NWHC WNS web page and replace all previous NWHC bat submission criteria.

TREASURER'S REPORT

DECEMBER 2022 TREASURERS'S REPORT

INCOME		**EXPENSES**	
Dividends	$ 0.01	Postage	$ 3.49
TOTAL	**$ 0.01**		**$ 3.49**

CASH	$ 106.05
CHECKING	$ 341.86
SAVINGS	$ 1,433.35
TOTAL	**$ 1,881.26**

PREPARED BY TREASURER JOHN TALBOT NSS #30254

2/8/2023

TRIP REPORTS

A trip report. Jester Bat Count, Feb. 4, 2023
Cavers: Dale Amlee, Jon Woltz, Levi Carter,
Andrew and John Van Dyke
Report by John Van Dyke

Like the aroma of grandma's kitchen. Like the scent of a pine forest. Like the feel of a worn out but favorite t-shirt. Or like the billionth rerun of an old, favored movie.

So it felt, walking to the first cave entrance to count bats, something not done in the southwest for a few years. Blue skies, bright sunshine, and a chilly breeze accompanied us to the entrance. Then the complete absence of water issued a not so friendly welcome.

Yet, the bats brought back better times. They alone continued our walk down memory lane. The "basic look" Myotis flanked us both side and top at various intervals, and it wasn't long before we found our first Tri-Color (Pip, another memory path). We spent a few moments looking and teaching about the visual differences of the Tri-Color. It was then that

(continued on page 3)

memory left me as I mentioned the bat's reddish outer coat. Andrew reminded me that he was still color blind, so I had to back-track and point out "other" characteristics.

We ventured down Pip Hall and reinstated a SW tradition - we all turned off our lights and basked in the complete absence of light. Well, until we noticed Dale's headlamp had a low, orange glow. Like a small, orange eye. He looked like Mike from Monsters Inc.

Did I mention that it was very dry? If I recall correctly we didn't hit standing water until after exiting Pip Hall and continued our trek. Even then, there wasn't running water, only pools. And those were only boot deep.

We made it to the normal exit point, one more twist and turn of memory lane. That outside climb gets harder and harder each year. Or I'm getting older each year. Maybe both. Still another memory.

We relocated to get to Train Tunnel. The short walk still provided sums of junk deposited from the road and the same crawl under barbed wire. But this year also gave us something new - snow - out of direct sunlight and clinging to life as the temperatures grew. At the cave mouth Levi peered in and proclaimed he knew why they named it Train. We entered and I remembered thinking it was like the first time I saw this cave. It was a warm feeling until we reached the turn-around and had not seen a single Big Eared Brown. I think this is what they call melancholy.

Moving again and finally parked outside the gate leading to Glade/Homestead. I had forgotten how much shorter this walk was than the one to Resurgence. At the "split" Andrew, Levi, and Dale decided they wanted to do the climb (descent) into the cave. Jon and I went the easier way and gathered data. Once together again we were all a bit dismayed to see no water.

But our friends were waiting. So began the final leg of the count in our Nation's longest Gyp cave. We worked our way to the Maternity Room where the not-so-fearless leader couldn't remember the fun way out. We back-tracked to the beginning and exited to a glorious, almost 70 degree SW day.

I think my fellow trekkers would agree that it was good to see very little trash in the caves. And there appeared to be no new graffiti or signs of human visitation. Further, we didn't encounter any dead bats, or other animals for that matter, save for a few cow bones here and there that were probably washed in during wetter days.

And finally, thankfully, we saw no signs of WNS. We paid pretty close attention and reinspected a number of bats along the way. This alone was the final feel good of the trip. It was drier, much drier, and the counts were down including zero Big Ears.

But it's still safe for our little friends. And that would signify the last of the thoughts on our trip down memory lane.

POTPOURI

This wildlife rehabilitator rescued over 1,600 bats during Houston cold snap

By Zoe Sottile, CNN
Published 7:57 AM EST, Sun January 1, 2023

A Texas wildlife rehabilitator nursed over 1,600 frozen bats back to health in her attic after many of them fell from their roosts during Houston's plunging temperatures last week.

Mary Warwick, the wildlife director at the Houston Humane Society, told CNN that she has been working with bats since 2019, when another cold snap sent Houston's bats falling from their roosts. But she had never staged a rescue operation quite this large before.

On December 21, temperatures in Houston dropped from the 60s during the day to 22 degrees at night. "That's a steep drop in temperature for the bats," Warwick explained. The Houston area is home to eight species of bats, including the tiny Mexican free-tailed bats that roost underneath several bridges in the city.

"As their body temperature dropped, they were no longer able to hold on inside the cavity of the bridge," Warwick said. "Some of them started to become so hypothermic they lost their footing and dropped."Warwick was

(Continued on page 4)

running errands when she realized she hadn't received any calls about bats needing help, which was unusual given the cold weather. She headed to one of Houston's bridges "and saw little dots on the ground," she said.
"There were about 138 bats that had become hypothermic," she went on. "They looked dead."

She went to work collecting the tiny bats in a box in her car, where she used the seat heater to start warming them up. "I live about 40 minutes from the bridge, and by 20

She went to work collecting the tiny bats in a box in her car, where she used the seat heater to start warming them up.

minutes, they were starting to move around, which gave me a lot of hope," she said.

These bats fell from their roosts during the cold temperatures in Houston.
Courtesy Houston Humane Society

Warwick returned that night to pick up another 50 frozen bats. Then she received a call from someone who had found 920 more bats in need of help.

At her home, Warwick sorted through the bats to determine which were still alive and which had died, from either the cold or the fall to the ground. She put them in incubators to raise their body temperatures and then administered subcutaneous fluids.

But caring for over 1,000 bats was overwhelming. So she reached out to Bat World Sanctuary, a nonprofit based in northern Texas. Bat World was unable to accommodate such a large contingent of bats, but they helped Warwick come up with a battle plan to care for the frozen creatures.

"We decided once I got them stabilized I could put them in my attic where it's cool but it's not freezing, and that would reduce their metabolism so they wouldn't need to eat, but they would drink water," she explained. Enter your email to subscribe to the CNN Five Things Newsletter.

So Warwick divided the bats, using crates to keep each colony together, and left them in her attic to rest and regain their strength. Several other local citizens also called in bats that needed rescuing, bringing the total to 1,602 recuperating bats in Warwick's makeshift bat hospital. They spent around three days total in her attic, she said.

Only 115 bats collected died, according to Warwick. "I was very happy with that," she said. "Especially the initial fall – that's gotta be a hard fall, falling 20 feet from the bridge. It's remarkable that these little guys can make it through."

And on Wednesday, with temperatures in Houston stabilizing, most of the bats were released back to the bridges where they came from. A few still struggled to fly correctly and were returned to the attic, where Warwick said they'll receive "extra supportive care."
Mary Warwick nursed the bats back to health in her attic while waiting for temperatures to stabilize.
Courtesy Houston Humane Society

Warwick and other helpers from the humane society rented a scissor lift to bring the bats as close as possible to their roosting area under the bridge. "We wanted bats to have the best chance of hearing and seeing, getting motivated by their friends," she explained. "They're very social, they do actually have friends up there, they know their chirps."

Warwick said that she enjoys caring for bats partially because "they're so small and tiny, and sweet."

Warwick and other rehabilitators that work with bats are vaccinated against rabies so they can safely work with the animals, she explained. The Houston Humane Society recommends that people trying to rescue bats either wear thick leather gloves or avoid touching them at all.

Bats are a crucial element in Houston's ecosystem, Warwick added. They feed on mosquitoes and insects that eat crops, and also act as an important food source for hawks and other predators.

The Houston Humane Society is currently fundraising for a new facility that will include a dedicated bat room, she said.

"We've moved into their territory, where they live," she said. "It's important for us to take care of them."

Pennsylvania home is the entrance to a cave that's been closed for 70 years

Pennsylvania home is the entrance to a cave - Upworthy

Jacalyn Wetzel

You can only access the cave from the basement of the home and it's open for business.

This Pennsylvania home is the entrance to a cave.

Have you ever seen something in a movie or online and thought, "That's totally fake," only to find out it's absolutely a real thing? That's sort of how this house in Pennsylvania comes across. It just seems too fantastical to be real, and yet somehow it actually exists.

The home sits between Greencastle and Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, and houses a pretty unique public secret. There's a cave in the basement. Not a man cave or a basement that makes you feel like you're in a cave, but an actual cave that you can't get to unless you go through the house.

Turns out the cave was discovered in the 1830s on the land of John Coffey, according to Uncovering PA, but the story of how it was found is unclear. People would climb down into the cave to explore occasionally until the land was leased about 100 years later and a small structure was built over the cave opening.

The idea was to make it accessible to visitors and use the cave as a tourist attraction, and the small structure was eventually built into a two-story house. But it was closed to the public in 1954 after the land was purchased for limestone mining and it remained closed for nearly 70 years. (In the words of Stephanie Tanner, "How rude.") Sometime during that 70-year closure, the home that contains the cave was purchased by Dara Black, and in 2021, it reopened to the public.

Currently, the home is occupied by Black, but to gain access to the cave you can simply book a tour. The best part about booking a tour is that you only have to make a donation to enter. It's a pay-what-you-can sort of setup, but since someone actually lives in the home, you can't just pop in and ask for a tour. You have to go during the "open house" times available.

According to the Black-Coffey Caverns Facebook page, they treat the tours truly as an open house, complete with snacks and drinks. There's a waiting room area where people can chat and eat their snacks while they wait for the tour to start. They also offer cave yoga once a month. According to Uncovering PA, the tour takes about 45 minutes to complete and there are about 3,000 feet worth of passageways.

Imagine living on top of a cave and just taking strangers on a waltz under your floorboards essentially. It makes me wonder if the house is quiet at night or if you can hear echoes of the cave sounds while you're trying to sleep. From the Facebook page, it appears that the cave doesn't have any lights, but there were pictures with some Christmas lights mounted to the cave walls. Otherwise, you have to use flashlights.

Hopefully, no mischievous children decide to play hide and seek or you just might have to call in a rescue crew. Literally. But what an unbelievable "pics or it didn't happen" kind of story to tell. It's not every day you run into someone that has a door that leads you to an underground cave.

Spelunkers find 27,000-year-old claw marks in hidden cave untouched for millennia

BY ASPEN PFLUGHOEFT

FEBRUARY 03, 2023 6:02 PM

Spelunkers find extinct bear's claw marks in cave in Spain | Miami Herald

Archaeologists exploring the Cueva del Arco reopened a sealed passageway into a huge cavern and discovered 27,000-year-old claw marks. Through a small rocky hole, archaeologists could feel the air — could tell some unknown space lay just beyond their reach. They pushed through the sealed up a passageway and shined a flashlight around the cavern. What lay before them exceeded all of their expectations.

The archaeologists in Spain were exploring the underground caverns of the Cueva del Arco when a particular spot caught their attention, according to a Friday, Feb. 3, news release from the University of Murcia. The sediment-filled spot seemed like a sealed up passageway into another cavern.

The spelunkers began to excavate, slowly and painstakingly, hoping they'd find something to make the effort worthwhile. They dug into the rocky cave wall, and air began coming through the hole. Researchers digging into the sealed passageway.

Ignacio Martín Lerma, lead archaeologist and professor at the University of Mercia, eventually managed to poke his head through the passageway, the release said. He expected to see an average sized chamber. Instead, he found himself staring into a humongous cavern. The cavern — untouched for millennia — was almost a mile long and had vaulted ceilings almost 65 feet high. Videos of the cavern show the massive underground space.

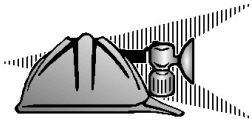
Exploring the cavern, the spelunkers made another discovery: claw marks. The scratches were found on many of the cave walls and left by cave bears, researchers said. The claw marks found in the cavern. European cave bears went extinct between 27,000 to 28,000 years ago, according to Britannica. The cave bears were anywhere from 880 to 2,200 pounds and similar in size to Kodiak bears found in Alaska or polar bears found in the Arctic.

"The identification of cave bear claw marks on many areas of the walls makes the cave a major, and really unique, example of a place where these huge mammals lived in southern Europe," the release said, according to a translation from The Guardian.

Researchers began exploring the caverns of the Cueva del Arco in 2015, per the release. Numerous settlements ranging from 7,000 years old to 50,000 years old have been uncovered in the cave system. The excavation to reopen the sealed passageway began in 2018 but was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers said. The hidden cavern has not been completely explored, and research is ongoing. Cueva del Arco is in the Region of Murcia and about 225 miles southeast of Madrid.

Central Oklahoma Grotto is a non-profit organization and a chapter of the NSS (National Speleological Society), 6001 Pulaski Pike, Huntsville, AL, 35810-1122 USA. Phone (256)852-1300. Dedicated to cave conservation and safety, C.O.G. publishes 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 an SASE with submission. All materials in this newsletter are 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

Friday
February 10, 2023
There will be a virtual meeting.
See you online!



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