CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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It was voted not to have a March meeting of the Central Oklahoma Grotto.

See ya at the April Meeting.

Decontamination protocols specific to WNS have been developed and will continue to be revised to incorporate the best available in formation. All current protocols will be avail able at the following website: http://www.fws.gov/WhiteNoseSyndrome
Source: DRAFT WNS Plan - v. 10.21.2010 from **A National Plan for Assisting States, Federal Agencies, and Tribes in Managing White-Nose Syndrome in Bats.** Duane has put the decontamination protocols in the COG website at http://okcavers.netfirms.com/wns/index.htm

The SW bat count crew above the ground

The SW bat count crew below the ground

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Northwest trips are scheduled the third Saturday of every month. Contract Sue or John Bozeman for details.

There will not be a March meeting. See you at in April.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
Minutes of the February 11, 2011 meeting

Host: the home of COG members John and Jeremiah Van Dyke

Attendees: Dale Amlee, Anne Ault, John Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, John Talbot, Lil Town, Dale Town, Jon and Kelley Woltz, both Van Dykes, and S. Beleu
Guests: Carol Buescher, Mart Dennis, and Tom Roche

The Honorable Jon Woltz began the meeting at 7:15. We held this meeting one hour early due to the inclement weather of that week.

OLD BUSINESS

none

NEW BUSINESS

· We talked about the 2011 bat count. The only caves we're counting are the southwest caves on Saturday, February 19 and the Washita Bat Caves on February 20. Dr. Caire and his crew have already counted the caves of northwest Oklahoma. They also counted bats in Selman Bat Cave while wearing protective clothing and respirators.

· Jon read aloud Dr. Caire's recommendations for disinfecting cave clothes and gear to prevent the possible spread of WNS in Oklahoma's caves.

· The next trip to Broken Horn Cave will be on Saturday, March 19.

· Dale and Carol can't host the meeting in April. So they and Dale Amlee agreed to switch meetings, Dale Amlee hosting in April, and Dale and Carol hosting in May.

· We're invited to attend the spring 2011 MVOR in Waynesville, Missouri., April 29 through May 1 If you're interested see: http://web.mst.edu/~spelunk/MVOR/main.html Looking at the caves for this event it appears that we would be spelunking in horizontal caves. Waynesville is just off of Interstate 44, not quite halfway between Springfield and St. Louis.

· Technocaver Dale Town showed off the 37-LED light that he told us about at our last meeting. Its brand: "Bayco".

TREASURER'S REPORT

John Talbot gave his treasurer's report, and reminded those who have yet to pay their dues that it's time to fork the money over.

We concluded the meeting at 7:55

TREASURER'S REPORTS

January 2011

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Dividend	$ 2.50	Printing	$7.00
Dues	$ 39.00		
Totals	**$ 41.50**		**$7.00**
CASH	**$ 204.49**		
CHECKING	**$ 496.03**		
SAVINGS	**$2,115.41**		
UNDEPOSIT FUNDS	**$39.00**		
TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 2/7/2011	**$2,854.93**		

PREPARED BY TREASURERJOHN TALBOT NSS#30254RE

February 2011

INCOME		EXPENSES
Dividend	$ 0.02	Printing
Dues	$ 18.00	
Totals	**$ 18.02**	
CASH	**$ 222.49**	
CHECKING	**$ 535.05**	
SAVINGS	**$2,115.41**	
TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 2/7/2011	**$2,872.95**	

PREPARED BY TREASURERJOHN TALBOT NSS#30254RE

TRIP REPORTS

Jester Bat Count
February 19, 2011
Personnel: Duane Del Vechio, John Talbot, John VanDyke, Dale Town, Carol Buescher, J.T. Van Dyke, Cole Talbot, Jalynne VanDyke
Written by Duane Del Vechio

Time again to do the annual Oklahoma Bat Count. This year we have a few other things to do other than count noses... we need to be on the lookout for WNS (White Nose Syndrome) on our hibernating bats.

We'll be taking a lot more pictures than usual on the bat count for scientists to look at the images to see if they can see any signs of the disease. Along with temperatures along the way, we'll also record humidity levels, and take soil samples.

We started at the resurgence (South Entrance) and went through to lovers crown (what we call Pip Hall) then came out and went to Train Tunnel entrance (where we usually see long ear bats). Finally, to the starting entrances of the cave system, Glade and Homestead Entrances to finish the count.

As far as we could see, we did not see any evidence of WNS on the bats...the resurgence (South entrance) was EXTREAMLY wet and humid...about 88% and moisture was everywhere... probably from the snow melt from the past 2 weeks of snow. A lot of bats were wet or were sparkling with water droplets and the walls glowed with sparkles from the water.

Train Tunnel we did find a few Long Ears so it made the extra trip worth it.

Glade did not have the giant mats we've seen in the past in this area... 2nd year in a row...though it was beautiful outside, the water was frozen in the first 150 feet of cave....the bats resting nice and cozy in their cold surroundings.

Jester Bat Count
Date: February 19, 2011
Written by *J.T. Van Dyke*

This year we had over 16,000 bats in 3 parts of the Jester Cave system. We had 1,6364 Myotis, 55 Pips, and, 6 long ears. We had a larger number of bats this year than last year.

The temperature and humidity in the cave this year were off the charts. It was around 50 degrees, and had well over 80% humidity. In other words there was a drastic change in the cave temperature and humidity.

The trip was very exciting this year. Joining me was: Duane, John V., John T., Dale, Carole, Cole Talbot, and Jalynne. Jalynne is one of the newest members of COG. So all must welcome her. And that was my trip report for 2011.

Jester Bat Count
Date: February 19, 2011
Written by Jalynne Van Dyke

I had lots of fun, but Duane kept on pestering me. He tried to take a picture of me but before he could I shoved my hand in front of the lens. The thing is Duane wasn't the only one bugging me; my cousin Cole was annoying me to death. It seemed like forever before the two of them left me alone.

We were going into the last cave, we were standing on one rock and I stepped on the ground in front of the rock. The temperature felt like it had dropped about ten degrees but when we stepped on the rock in front of us, the temperature felt like it went back up. In that same cave the bats were very noisy. At first it scared me, and then I thought it sounded cool.

We were in the last cave and I stepped into a huge pile of guano. What had happened was there was a lot of water and we were trying to avoid the water so we were stepping on rocks, and I thought this huge pile of guano was a rock. So I stepped on it and only then did I realize I had stepped in guano.

And that is my trip report.

Wichita Bat Count
Date: February 20, 2011
Personnel: Jon and Kelley Woltz, Dale Amlee, Anne Ault, Steve Beleu
Summarized by the editor

This team met to count bats in the Wichita caves. The caves are not very big but has enough bats that need to be counted.

The team estimated the following numbers:

North Cave - 5m, 26p
Central Cave - 3,734m, 13p
South Cave - 3,094m, 8p

Total estimate: 6,833 myotis velifer, 47 pips

Anne and Dale only helped with the counting in the North Cave and the rest went on to do the other caves. We've never seen these bats as awake as they were on this warm day; and those stains on the pages of my notebook aren't from dirt but guano.

POTPOURRI

. IN THE WASHITA BAT CAVES

By Steve Beleu

Into the cave we crawl, contorting ourselves
While pushing with our feet, pulling with our forearms
Until we emerge--everywhere gypsum clouds--
And we enter--everywhere gypsum crystals--
The wonders between these walls. We wordlessly
Touch both cave walls at once, while our feet splash
And shiver in chill waters, never warm.
We soon smell bats, smelling them before we see them,
Their stench becoming severe; stopping, we look up:
Some bats flap their wings, a few fly off
But most don't move, so we estimate their mats
And count small groups, guess how many fly
And number single bats, then by twos and threes.
Then suddenly time begins: this is not the past
Much less the future or is even needed at all
And the differences between man and bat
Now seem few and unimportant.
We trudge back clumsily under the night sky
While they soar above us like the grace of love.

Dedicated to my computer technician John Bozeman
without whose help neither my verse nor music appears

White Nose Syndrome

Written by Michele Skalicky, KSMU News
Reprint from the internet

A disease that has heavily impacted bat populations in eastern states has been found in Missouri. KSMU's Michele has more…

Biologists in Missouri thought they had at least another year before white nose syndrome was found on a bat in the state. But laboratory tests confirmed the presence of the fungus on a bat in a privately-owned cave in Pike County in northeast Missouri. According to Bill Elliott, cave biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation, the fungal infection gets on a bat's face, ears and wings and deeply invades the skin tissues.

Infected bats awaken more often during their winter hibernation and use up stored fat reserves. They either starve to death or freeze…

"Sometimes the bats are found kind of pathetically flying around at the entrance to the cave or even going outside in midwinter with snow on the ground trying to find bugs to eat, and it's pretty sad, you know."

Biologist aren't completely sure how it spreads, but it appears to spread mainly thru bat-to-bat contact and has not been found to infect humans or other animals.

So far white nose syndrome has infected six bat species in the U.S. that hibernate in caves and mines, including the endangered Indiana Bat. All are found in Missouri.

Elliott says the finding of one infected bat in the state is a very early warning for biologists working to protect Missouri's bats against the disease. No treatment has been found. Elliott says caves can be closed so bats have quiet time to recover from the infection since some DO survive. And disinfecting caving gear so WNS spores aren't carried into caves can also help…

"Right now there's nothing else we can do except inform the public and try to get everybody's cooperation."

MDC has been working for several months on an action plan to protect bats against white nose syndrome. Elliott says they'll begin closing bat caves on MDC lands to the public soon. He says the Mark Twain National Forest closed its caves a year ago to everything except certain research activities that require a permit.

But three-quarters of Missouri's caves are on private land .

According to Elliott, the Department of Conservation will work with landowners interested in helping to protect bats on their property…

"We would recommend, if someone asked us, that disinfection be required before going in bat caves and that people only generally go in late spring to early fall and pretty much stay out of the bat caves from early October to mid April when the bats are hibernating."

Landowners can contact him at bill.elliott.mdc.mo.gov. Elliott says the loss of bats would mean a lot more pests for humans to deal with…

"If we lose a lot of our bats, and that's a distinct possibility, we're gonna see less mosquito control by bats; we're gonna see possibly more pests on row crops and on forests."

He says it's hard to predict how heavy the impact will be in the state, but there are millions of bats in Missouri that eat thousands of insects every night in the warmer months…

"Their contribution to our ecology and even our economy is probably pretty significant."

According to Elliott, research from other states isn't encouraging for Missouri. In the 11 states (all in the eastern US) affected before Missouri, a total of 1 to 2 million bats have died in just 3 years.

Research is ongoing into medical treatments for white nose syndrome and into ways to stop the spread of the disease.

Elliott says the public can help by supporting those research efforts.

CAVES OF THE BRAHMINS

By Steve Beleu

The cave has been released from the stones,
Uncovered by the slow work of flowing water
Eating soft rock away from porous stone.
Statues begin to emerge from rich silence
Still deep in their contemplation of the eternal,

The same as the ancient seers who lived
300 years in continuous meditation
Neither eating nor drinking but nourished
By the air and winds, breathing so slowly
They didn't disturb the molecules

They were immersed.in deep as life.
Ornate walls, celings and floors
Next emerge from the strata, then
The jewels of the caves grow--
Speleothems--numerous as stars.

Soon this cave will be discovered
By bowing worshippers and acclaimed
As a central pillar of their beliefs.
Milllenia laters scholars will postulate
That the god's disciples worked here

Decades until they completed it.
But the cave created itself over aeons
To mirror the temples above ground:
The holy mirrors the human as well
As we strive to mirror the eternal:

Cave below, temple above,
Human below, eternal above:
Mirrors that face each other.

Neanderthals Ate Dolphins, Seals, Cave Remains Suggest

John Roach for National Geographic News
September 22, 2008

Neanderthals living in a pair of caves on the Mediterranean Sea regularly feasted on mussels, fish, and other types of marine life, according to a new study.

The finding suggests that Neanderthals actively foraged for seafood just like early modern humans, according to Clive Finlayson, an anthropologist at the Gibraltar Museum.

Neanderthals and modern humans are distinct species that split from a common ancestor several hundred thousand years ago.

Why modern humans thrived and Neanderthals ultimately failed has long been a topic of scientific intrigue, and previous research had suggested that the ability to exploit marine resources was one of the defining characteristics for the success of modern humans.

But the new research may eliminate sophisticated foraging skills from the list of potential advantages unique to humans.

"I don't think that the success of one or the other had to do with subsistence, with the way they hunted or fed," Finlayson said.

"There may be other factors coming into this, or it may just have been a question of luck."

Seafood Feasts

The new theory is based on excavations of two caves on the western edge of Gibraltar, a British territory at the southern tip of Spain (see map).

Previous studies showed Neanderthals periodically occupied the caves as recently as 28,000 years ago.

Inside the caves Finlayson and his colleagues found mussel shells and the bones of seals, dolphins, and fish mixed in with the remains of deer and other land mammals.

Many of the bones show signs of being cooked over a fire, and some have marks left by stone tools used to cleave off chunks of flesh.

Seafood remains are found throughout various layers in the caves, indicating that Neanderthals regularly exploited marine resources for tens of thousands of years.

"It seems to suggest that this wasn't a one-off, but that these guys were doing it on a regular basis," Finlayson said.

He and colleagues describe the findings online today in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Systematic Foraging?

Curtis Marean is an anthropologist at Arizona State University in Tempe who has found evidence that prehistoric humans were feasting on seafood in South Africa 165,000 years ago.

Marean said the new study clearly shows that Neanderthals occasionally ate seafood. But he is not convinced their exploitation of seafood was on par with that of early modern humans in Africa.

"I don't think there's enough evidence here to indicate that they are systematically being a coastal forager in the sense that we think of coastal foragers," he said.

In South Africa, Marean noted, scientists have found waste piles called shell middens that date back nearly a hundred thousand years. These piles contain several thousand pieces of shellfish discarded by humans.

By contrast, the Gibraltar caves yielded just 149 pieces of shellfish. Those pieces could be from a handful of mussels, Marean noted.

The differences in abundance could stem from different availabilities of seafood at the two sites, or in the abilities of the two species to actively forage for ocean food, he added.

To resolve the issue, Marean recommends a systematic comparison of Neanderthal and human seafood collection at sites with similar availability.

"Were Neanderthals [exploiting seafood] like we expect they would if they were modern? And if they weren't, then the question is: Why?" he said.

"We could be getting into something interesting there, for sure."

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 3208 Gettysburg Dr., Altus, Oklahoma, 73521. All submissions to the newsletter should be sent to the editor: Lil Town, P.O. Box 8346, Altus, OK 73522: Telephone: (580)471-1238: E-mail: oklmt@cableone.net. 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!* Web Site: http://www.okcavers.com

There will not be a March meeting.
See you in April at Dale Amlee's.

Central Oklahoma Grotto
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