CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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The June meeting of the Central Oklahoma Grotto will be held at 7:30, Friday, June 9, 2006, at the home of Duane Del Vecchio.

Picture from the 2006 bat count that can be seen on our website.
http://okcavers.netfirms.com/bat%20counts/swbat06/pictures/swbat06009.htm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Northwest trips are scheduled the third Saturday of every month. Contract Sue or John Bozeman for details.
*Southwest trips are scheduled the first Saturday of every month. Contact Lil Town for details.

*The 7:30 June meeting will be at Duane Del Vecchio's, Remember, the next meeting will be in September!

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
Minutes of the May 12, 2006 meeting

Host: the abode of Anne Ault and den of her critters.

Members present: Dale Amlee, Anne Ault, Sue and John Bozeman, Roy Diehl, John Talbot, Lil and Dale Town, Jon Woltz, and Steve Beleu
Guest of Mr. Woltz: Kelley Logan, Weatherford

Chairman Diehl began the meeting at 8:07

OLD BUSINESS

- Sue asked everyone about their contributions to the next *Okahoma Underground.* We were treated to an amazing array of excuses!

- We had a general discussion about the building materials that we might use to construct replacement mesh screens over National Geographic Pit in Carlsbad Cavern. He didn't realize it at the time, but Dale Amlee volunteered to become Lead Officer in this investigation.

NEW BUSINESS

- Without Duane, Lead Officer for our Annual Pilgrimage Unto Carlsbad, in attendance we were left to flounder in the Stygian darkness, but we resolved to e-mail him about the various steps that we should take between now and June 2 to get our butts into a motel in Carlsbad.

- I asked about "Cavanal Mountain" near Poteau. The name of this mountain—actually not a mountain because it doesn't meet the USGS' standard for mountains at 2,000 feet minimum, being 1,999 feet high and hence marketed by the Poteau Chamber of Commerce as "The World's Highest Hill"—is derived from a French word that means "cave". Sue said that she would send me the e-mail address of caver Bill Puckett, who lives in the area and might know. Are there some limestone caves around Poteau? Inquiring minds want to know, but so do I.

- We geared up to go survey in Broken Horn Cave the following Saturday.

TREASURER'S REPORT

John Talbot read his report, which is included in this newsletter.

Chairman Diehl concluded the meeting at 8:30

Minutes by The Skillful Ogre as recorded by crayon on Big Chief Tablet

Buntline Hitch

The Buntline Hitch is (was) used to tie a buntline to a square sail. It is a secure knot, but it tends to jam, so it is not easy to untie. Therefore, it is useful for work that will be left unattended for longer periods, since it will not untie suddenly.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

INCOME		EXPENSES	
DIVIDEND	$ 0.12	POSTAGE	$ 11.31
		INK	6.24
TOTALS	**$ 0.12**		**$ 17.55**
CASH ON HAND	$ 72.59		
CHECKING	$ 599.54		
SAVINGS	$ 2,620.92		
		PREPARED BY TREASURER	
TOTAL FUNDS AS OF		JOHN TALBOT	
4/8/06	**$ 3,293.05**		

TRIP REPORTS

Trip Report: Broken Horn Cave
Date: May 20, 2006
Personnel: John and Sue Bozeman, Jon Woltz,
Written by Sue Bozeman

On May 20, 2006, the two sets of surveyors popped into Jay's Entrance of Broken Horn Cave with everyone trying to escape the heat. Even Anne braved the poison ivy guarding the crawley hole entrance and scooted into the Cairn Room to finish 'getting dressed'. Not that we were exactly unclad == just that the final niceties were put on -- the upper elbow pads, all the paraphernalia accoutrements preparatory to our task.

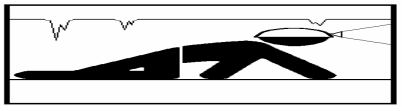
The groups had been set up earlier by Chairman Roy. John Bozeman, Jon Woltz and I (Sue Bozeman) were to continue our upstream survey sans Duane, who had a job interview and could not join us. (good luck, Duane! Hope it was worth missing a fun day of caving!). We found our survey point from last time and within two shots, discovered that we'd made the Trident Room -- where three passages come together. We surveyed to the Apex Rock, figuring that everything else was mud, but this triangular rock would withstand flood and shifting sand banks. Then, because the choice was ours, we chose the driest of the passages -- the one to the right! The center one is the active stream course and we KNOW how icky and watery THAT one is from prior explorations. And the one to the left is still wet from the last rain and would currently require 'breast stroking' through decidedly unpleasant decaying deciduous matter and muck.

We crawled along some 80 feet of pleasantly wide tube passage. Jon spotted a barred tiger salamander on one side of the passage -- not the usual spots, but rather very nicely defined yellow bars! Of decent size, nose to tail it was about seven inches long. Yes, we know that's not how you measure a salamander -- nose to anal slit -- but the tail deserves acknowledgment, too, dontcha think? Even if it IS detachable!

Once to the major 'room', we realized that there was an awe-ful lot of what looked like fresh breakdown -- like maybe last week? The rest of this passage had such wonderful potential, but we know that we've spent several hours trying to 'get through' and never even heard a voice or pounding from the other end. Just too much breakdown.

We were to survey until 4 and then quit and turn back. We set a point very high above the most recent water line -- which was VERY high up the mudbank! -- and most of the lower passage and ALL of the 80 foot crawl had been totally submerged during the last rain earlier this year. Nice time. Surveyed about 300 feet.

We cleaned up and our dear hostess, Mrs. S., had fixed us an angel food cake with our choice of 3 ice creams! Believe it or not, we ate the WHOLE cake! She kept insisting that 'I made it for you' -- delicious desert, many many thanks! And then we headed for Fairview and the traditional .... pizza!



Trip Report: Broken Horn Cave
Date: May 20, 2006
Personnel: Roy Diehl, Dale Amlee, Steve Beleu, Anne Ault, John & Sue Bozeman, Jon Woltz.
Report by Dale Amlee

After a very long hiatus, the caving group finally got dirty again and officially discarded the unfair label of "virtual cavers." Our journey to Broken Horn cave was met with kind weather, a bit hot, but dry for a change. Typical early summer in Oklahoma. As this was only the second mapping expedition into Broken Horn, we were all still eager to see what the cave had to offer. There are numerous small arms of the cave that have not fully been explored yet, and the spirit of venturing into the unknown was raising the adrenalin levels of at least one caver in the group as we prepared to go underground.

With seven cavers in the group we split into two mapping parties: John & Sue went with Jon down one arm of the previously mapped passage, and I went with Steve, Anne and Roy down the other arm. As I had never had the opportunity to do the book portion of the mapping duties, the group decided that I might as well start to learn now. With Roy's help I began my new drawing chores, writing down the numbers fed to me by Roy, Steve and Anne. It was more difficult than I had anticipated, and I realized that part of my problem was that due to the lack of light in a cave (duh!) it was difficult or impossible to see intersections or turns in the passages all at once. My caving headlight would only illuminate one section of a passage at a time. Many times I began to do a rough sketch of a passage curve or intersection in the book only to find out, once the compass headings were given to me, that my visual feeling for the angles of the passages bore no resemblance to the real headings and direction changes involved. I quickly learned to wait to draw my sketches until after the compass headings were given to me.

The folks in the group were a bit out of shape due to the lack of recent caving expeditions, and after only a couple of hours of mapping some of us were already beginning to get the "are we there yet?" feelings. Still, we struggled along with our mapping duties until the appointed stopping hour came. We had mapped roughly 400 feet of additional passage, and that felt like a good accomplishment for a group of people so out of practice.

After re-joining our cave partners at the appointed rendezvous location we headed back to the vehicles and drove back to the ranch. When we arrived back at the ranch house we discovered that Mrs. S. had prepared a wonderful snack of angel food cake and ice cream for us. On a hot day like this there could hardly be anything better than that with which to relax and cool off.

POTPOURRI

Bats and Rabies

Copied from the National Center for Infectious Diseases
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/bats_&_rabies/bats&.htm

What is rabies and how do people get it? Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. People get rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies (a rabid animal). Any wild mammal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote, or bat, can have rabies and transmit it to people. It is also possible, but quite rare, that people may get rabies if infectious material from a rabid animal, such as saliva, gets directly into their eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound.

Because rabies is a fatal disease, the goal of public health is, first, to prevent human exposure to rabies by education and, second, to prevent the disease by anti-rabies treatment if exposure occurs. Tens of thousands of people are successfully treated each year after being bitten by an animal that may have rabies. A few people die of rabies each year in the United States, usually because they do not recognize the risk of rabies from the bite of a wild animal and do not seek medical advice.

Why should I learn about bats and rabies? Most of the recent human rabies cases in the United States have been caused by rabies virus from bats. Awareness of the facts about bats and rabies can help people protect themselves, their families, and their pets. This information may also help clear up misunderstandings about bats.

When people think about bats, they often imagine things that are not true. Bats are not blind. They are neither rodents nor birds. They will not suck your blood -- and most do not have rabies. Bats play key roles in ecosystems around the globe, from rain forests to deserts, especially by eating insects, including agricultural pests. The best protection we can offer these unique mammals is to learn more about their habits and recognize the value of living safely with them.

How can I tell if a bat has rabies?

Rabies can be confirmed only in a laboratory. However, any bat that is active by day, is found in a place where bats are not usually seen (for example, in a room in your home or on the lawn), or is unable to fly, is far more likely than others to be rabid. Such bats are often the most easily approached. Therefore, it is best never to handle any bat.

What should I do if I come in contact with a bat?

If you are bitten by a bat -- or if infectious material (such as saliva) from a bat gets into your eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound -- wash the affected area thoroughly and get medical advice immediately. Whenever possible, the bat should be captured and sent to a laboratory for rabies testing (see: How can I safely capture a bat in my home?).

People usually know when they have been bitten by a bat. However, because bats have small teeth which may leave marks that are not easily seen, there are situations in which you should seek medical advice even in the absence of an obvious bite wound. For example, if you awaken and find a bat in your room, see a bat in the room of an unattended child, or see a bat near a mentally impaired or intoxicated person, seek medical advice and have the bat tested.

People cannot get rabies just from seeing a bat in an attic, in a cave, or at a distance. In addition, people cannot get rabies from having contact with bat guano (feces), blood, or urine, or from touching a bat on its fur (even though bats should never be handled!).

What should I do if my pet is exposed to a bat?

If you think your pet or domestic animal has been bitten by a bat, contact a veterinarian or your health department for assistance immediately and have the bat tested for rabies. Remember to keep vaccinations current for cats, dogs, and other animals.

How can I keep bats out of my home?

Some bats live in buildings, and there may be no reason to evict them if there is little chance for contact with people. However, bats should always be prevented from entering rooms of your home. For assistance with"bat-proofing" your home, contact an animal-control or wildlife conservation agency. If you choose to do the "bat-proofing" yourself, here are some suggestions. Carefully examine your home for holes that might allow bats entry into your living quarters. Any openings larger than a quarter-inch by a half-inch should be caulked. Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics, fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking, and ensure that all doors to the outside close tightly.

Additional "bat-proofing" can prevent bats from roosting in attics or buildings by covering outside entry points. Observe where the bats exit at dusk and exclude them by loosely hanging clear plastic sheeting or bird netting over these areas. Bats can crawl out and leave, but cannot re-enter. After the bats have been excluded, the openings can be permanently sealed. For more information about "bat-proofing" your home, contact Bat Conservation International.

Things to remember when "bat-proofing"

- During summer, many young bats are unable to fly. If you exclude adult bats during this time, the young may be trapped inside and die or make their way into living quarters. Thus, if possible, avoid exclusion from May through August.

- Most bats leave in the fall or winter to hibernate, so these are the best times to "bat-proof" your home.

How can I safely capture a bat in my home?

If a bat is present in your home and you cannot rule out the possibility of exposure, leave the bat alone and contact an animal-control or public health agency for assistance. If professional help is unavailable, use precautions to capture the bat safely, as described below. What you will need:

- leather work gloves (put them on)
- small box or coffee can
- piece of cardboard
- tape

When the bat lands, approach it slowly, while wearing the gloves, and place the box or coffee can over it. Slide the cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside. Tape the cardboard to the container securely, and punch small holes in the cardboard, allowing the bat to breathe. Contact your health department or animal-control authority to make arrangements for rabies testing.

If you see a bat in your home and you are sure no human or pet exposure has occurred, confine the bat to a room by closing all doors and windows leading out of the room except those to the outside. The bat will probably leave soon. If not, it can be caught, as described, and released outdoors away from people and pets.

How can rabies be prevented?

- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly. "Love your own, leave other animals alone" is a good principle for children to learn.
- Wash any wound from an animal thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately.
- Have all dead, sick, or easily captured bats tested for rabies if exposure to people or pets occurs.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might contact people and pets.
- Be a responsible pet owner by keeping vaccinations current for all dogs, cats, and ferrets, keeping your cats and ferrets inside and your dogs under direct supervision, calling animal control to remove stray animals from your neighborhood, and consider having your pets spayed or neutered.

Are bats beneficial?
Yes. Worldwide, bats are a major predator of night-flying insects, including pests that cost farmers billions of dollars annually. Throughout the tropics, seed dispersal and pollination activities by bats are vital to rain forest survival. In addition, studies of bats have contributed to medical advances including the development of navigational aids for the blind. Unfortunately, many local populations of bats have been destroyed and many species are now endangered.

Where can I learn more about bats?
Contact your state or local wildlife conservation agency or Bat Conservation International: Bat Conservation International, Inc. P O Box 162603, Austin, Texas 78716
www.batcon.org

To learn more about endangered bats and the Endangered Species Act, contact the US Fish and Wildlife Service: U S Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Endangered Species, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 452, Arlington, Virginia 22203
www.fws.gov

Where can I learn more about rabies?
Contact your state or local health department or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Infectious Diseases Rabies Section MS G-33, 1600 Clifton Road Atlanta, Georgia 30333
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies

THE EDITOR: Visit the website to see the complete report as well as great color pictures of many bats!

Salamanders 6

Written by Steve Beleu

1
Kicking each leg front then back like a frog
Beneath this low ceiling in a crawl that never ends…

2
Exhausted or not he can nap anywhere,
Even on a cold mud bank, one foot in water.

3
Every calcite raft we step over seems to shudder,
Break apart, and sink back into the pool.

4
So much flowstone shines in this obscure chamber
It seems that this cave could slide through space and time.

5
When we return to the surface will it be better,
Our world of scheming dreams, or should we stay here?

6
I've pulled myself through this tight squeeze so often
My arms grow into my thighs and my feet whip back and forth.

Copied from the Bulletin of the OKLAHOMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Vol. I, March, 1976, No. 1

PREDATION ON THE FREE-TAILED BAT BY THE GREAT HORNED OWL

BY R. K. CHESSER AND M. L. KENNEDY

The bat caves of Oklahoma, especially those of the western third of the main body of the state, have received much attention during the past decade or so. A common bat of these caves is the Mexican Free-tailed Bat (Tadarida brasiliensis). Predation on young free-tailed bats by the Great Horned Owl (Bubo virginianus) at Conner's Cave in Major County, northwestern Oklahoma, was reported by Perry and Rogers (1964, Southwest. Nat., 9: 205). The finding of skeletal parts of at least 46 free-tailed bats in 24 Great Horned Owl pellets (and several pellet fragments) at Reed Cave in Greer County, southwestern Oklahoma, was reported by Taylor (1964, J. Mammal., 45: 300-301). Predation on free-tailed bats by hawks and owls at Vickery Bat Cave, in Major County, was discussed by Looney (1972, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 5: 1-4) and by Hardin (ibid., pp. 4-5). Perry (1965, Oklahoma State University Doctoral Dissertation, p. 27) estimated the free-tailed bat population of Reed Cave at four million in the summer of 1963.

Tadarida brusiliensis is strongly migratory. Its winter home is in central and tropical Mexico (there are winter records, too, for Central America and northern South America). Breeding takes place in February and March, so when the hordes return to their summer home in the north, most of the females are pregnant. Thousands of young bats are born each summer in the above-mentioned caves. A female free-tailed bat, banded as a baby in Oklahoma in the summer of 1968 and recaptured at Estacidn Tamuin, San Luis Potosi, Mexico, on 14 November of that year, had traveled about a thousand miles in reaching its winter home in the tropical lowlands just south of the Tropic of Cancer (Barbour and Davis, 1969, Bats of America, p. 206).

The main mouth of Reed Cave faces south and is about 40 feet wide and 20 feet high. A few feet to the east of this entrance, and approximately 20 feet above it, is a smaller opening that faces west and leads into a passageway that is about 11 feet high and 11 feet wide. This chamber narrows sharply about 8 feet back from its mouth. On its floor on 16 September 1972, we collected 28 pellets and seven pellet fragments, all of which had, presumably, been regurgitated by the two Great Horned Owls that were roosting there. One owl was noticeably smaller than the other. The owls must have been roosting there regularly, for we flushed them from the same chamber on three occasions subsequently. Whenever anyone approached their roost they flew out and away, but returned shortly if not disturbed.

All of the pellets and pellet fragments except one contained free-tailed bat remains. The exception appeared to be a very old pellet. The pellets contained the remains (chiefly fur, skulls, and larger wing and leg bones) of at least 95 free-tailed bats. The 78 skulls were of both young and adult animals. Eight was the largest number of skulls that we found in any one pellet. We did not find identifiable remains of any other bat than T. brasiliensis, though several other bat species are known to inhabit southwestern Oklahoma (Hall and Kelson, 1959, The mammals of North America, 1:157-203). Most of the pellets and pellet fragments contained bat remains only, but four contained also the remains of small rodents and a fifth contained also the remains of a lizard. We found no bird remains in any of the pellets. At no time during the summer and fall of 1972 did we see any other bat species than T. brasiliensis in Reed Cave.

Obviously the two owls that we continued to flush from their roost chamber had been preying principally on free-tailed bats during a period when vast numbers of the animals were readily available. We had no way of knowing, of course, how long a period the pellets and pellet fragments represented, whether the two owls regurgitated all of their pellets at that particular roost, or just where the owls caught the bats — i.e., whether in the cave or while the bats were flying out of, or into, the cave.

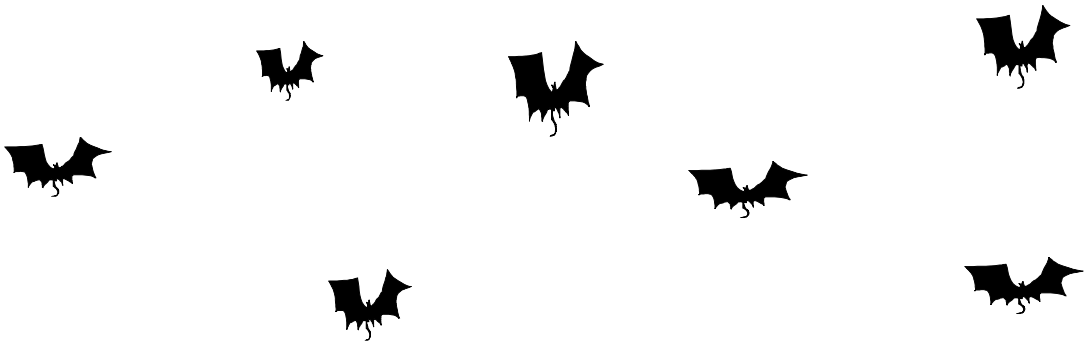
When free-tailed bats have left Oklahoma for the winter, such important predators as the Great Horned Owl must turn their attention toward other sources of food. Now that we know something about the summer food habits of the Great Horned Owls that roost (and perhaps even nest) in free-tailed bat caves, these same birds should, if possible, be studied carefully during winter and spring. The owls are believed to be non-migratory. At this writing we can only assume that they continue to use the caves as roosts in winter, faring forth to obtain food other than bats outside the caves.

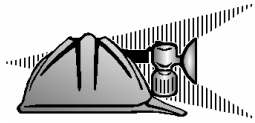
We wish to thank Dr. Charles C. Carpenter for identifying the lizard remains for us, and Kathy Nipper and Cecil R. Chesser for their assistance in obtaining the pellets.

DEPT. OF ZOOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069; DEPT. OF BIOLOGY, MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38152, 1 DECEMBER 1975.

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 or Dale Town, 3208 Gettysburg Dr., Altus, OK 73521: Telephone: (580)477-4027: 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!*

Remember the June meeting will be at Duane Del Vecchio's, Friday, June 9th.





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