

Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

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For Immediate Release

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JEWEL CAVE CONDUCTS MID-WINTER BAT SURVEY

On February 5, 2007 Jewel Cave National Monument conducted its annual hibernating bat survey. Over 1,000 bats of up to 8 species hibernate in Jewel Cave each year, taking advantage of the cave's variety of climatic and structural conditions. The cave is the largest known bat hibernaculum in the Black Hills, and currently hosts one of the largest hibernating colonies of Townsend's big-eared bats anywhere in the world. The 2007 count was conducted by bat biologists and park staff and yielded 1,351 bats, all found within ¼-mile of the cave's historic entrance. This entrance is closed to Lantern Tours in the winter in order to protect the bat population from human disturbance. The Scenic Tour area of the cave, located below the visitor center, does not contain bats and is open for tours year round. Bats are highly beneficial mammals, each consuming hundreds of insects each night during the summer months. They help to control populations of mosquitoes, moths, and other bothersome pests. For more information on the bats of Jewel Cave, visit <http://www.nps.gov/jeca/naturescience/bats.htm> or call Cave Specialist Mike Wiles at (605) 673-2061 x1226.

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