



The Top Ten Things Every Visitor to Carlsbad Caverns Wants to Know

(And Usually Isn't Afraid to Ask)

by Kathryn Cassingham

1. Does anything live in here?

Yes. In the warmer months, bats use the cave as a place to sleep. The cave also is a permanent home to a host of critters. Some caves have fish and amphibians. We don't. Carlsbad was not formed by a river, so the fish have no way in. The cave environment doesn't contain much energy, so we don't have large animals. We do have a whole food chain of insects: mites, springtails, centipedes, spiders, and beetles. You may also see cave crickets. You won't hear them. Cave crickets are cannibals, so if you're a cricket in Carlsbad Caverns, it's not advisable to broadcast your location.

2. Does anything ever fall in here?

Yes. That wasn't the answer you were hoping for, was it? Relax! In the entire recorded history of the park, a formation has never fallen due to natural causes. In 2000, some rocks did slide across the trail. We determined this happened because of human activity. That's why we tell you to stay on the trail! Things do fall once in while though. You can see evidence of this all over the cave. Check out Iceberg Rock! This 200,000 ton giant fell in the Main Corridor hundreds of thousands of years ago. "Once in a while" means on the geologic time scale, maybe every few hundred thousand years. So the odds are not very good that you'll be standing underneath anything when it falls. Plus, a lot of the debris you see fell in as the solution that made the cave drained away. So relax!

3. Is the Bottomless Pit really bottomless?

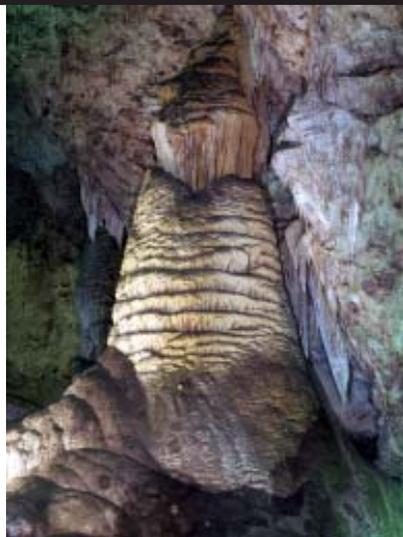
Some people would rather not know the answer to this question. If knowing the truth will ruin the sense of mystery for you, please skip to question #4. Okay, are you ready? The Bottomless Pit is (drumroll please) 140 feet deep. Many caves have a "Bottomless Pit". This is because early explorers had only lanterns for light. The lanterns could only penetrate a few feet into the darkness, so even a shallow pit appeared to have no bottom.

4. How long have the trails, lights, etc. been here?

The first trails and lighting system were built by the National Park Service in 1926. The modern trail routes have been in place since the 1950s. They were paved in 1953. The asphalt was replaced by the non-slick emery chip and epoxy resin surface in 1978. The lighting system was overhauled during 1975 - 1977. The cave tours became self-guided in 1978 due to the large volume of visitors. The self-guided tour of the four scenic rooms became the ranger-guided King's Palace tour in 1993. This was due to vandalism and theft of formations.



NPS photo



NPS photo/Dale Smith

5. Is this the biggest cave in the world?

The Big Room is really, really big. You could fit 6 football fields inside it. It is not, however, the biggest room in the world. Sarawak Chamber in Borneo is bigger. Mammoth Cave in Kentucky gets credit as the world's longest cave with over 350 miles of passage mapped. Carlsbad Cavern is 53rd, with 30 miles. The world's deepest cave is Krubera, in the nation of Georgia. Carlsbad deepest point is Lake of the Clouds, at 1,037 feet.

6. How much of this cave has been explored?

30 miles of it. We still have "leads", or untried passages. Carlsbad Cavern is still being explored. Most of our exploration is done by volunteers over three-day weekends.

7. How old is this formation?

Unless you're standing in Lower Cave at the "Texas Toothpick" or in the King's Palace at the tunnel entrance, the answer to this question should always be "I don't know." Cave formations don't have a universal growth rate. What affects growth speed the most is the amount of water entering the cave. This changes from year to year, not to mention from millennium to millennium. We do have ways of dating formations. But we'd have to break them, which doesn't seem like a good tradeoff.

8. Is this cave still alive?

No. Nor is it dead. It's rock. Some parts of the cave are active, or growing. Other parts are inactive or dormant. More water means more growth and vice versa. The amount of water in the cave is a reflection of surface conditions.

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NPS photo

Upcoming Renovations

After nearly fifty years, it's time for an update! Upon its completion in 1957, the Visitor Center at Carlsbad Caverns National Park was an example of modern conveniences and technology. However, the Visitor Center is now outdated and past due for a makeover. With the planning and design phases nearly complete, park superintendent John Benjamin announced that the park will begin renovating its visitor center in October 2006. "This project has been in the works for many years," said Benjamin. "It's a great feeling to see the hard work of so many people coming to fruition. The rehabilitated visitor center will be more visitor friendly and everything will work properly!"

Everyone entering Carlsbad Cavern must come through the visitor center, resulting in crowded conditions and difficult visitor-flow patterns. All of the building's infrastructure components, such as heating and air conditioning, alarms, electrical, water and wastewater systems, have exceeded their useful life and no longer function effectively or efficiently. The entire building and infrastructure will be renovated; this includes the Cavern Supply Company's restaurant and gift shop and the Carlsbad Caverns-Guadalupe Mountains Association bookstore as well.

While the building is under construction, park operations, including the concessioner and association, will move into temporary trailers in the parking lot. Cave tours will continue as usual. Visitors may continue to enter Carlsbad Cavern via elevator or by hiking the natural entrance trail. Each evening the park will close the entrance gate and reopen it in the morning.

The \$7.5-million project is funded through the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (formerly Recreation Fee Demonstration) and is expected to take one year to complete.

Construction specialists and park staff explored various renovation possibilities, including creating a new contact center by the highway instead of directly above the cave. This option proved to be too costly. Renovations will reduce human impacts on the surface and cave environments. In this example, change will be for the better.

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Telephone and Web Directory

Carlsbad Caverns National Park
3225 National Parks Hwy
Carlsbad, NM 88220
(505) 785-2232
www.nps.gov/cave

Guadalupe Mountains National Park
400 Pine Canyon
Salt Flat, Texas 79847
(915) 828-3251
www.nps.gov/gumo

Carlsbad Caverns Guadalupe Mountains Association
Operates both parks' bookstores. Books may also be purchased by mail or online.
PO Box 1417
Carlsbad, NM 88221
(505) 785-2486
(505) 785-2318 FAX
www.ccgma.org

Food, Lodging, and Camping
Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce:
(505) 887-6516
www.carlsbadchamber.com

Van Horn, Texas Visitors Bureau:
(915) 283-2682
www.vanhornadvocate.com/
communityad1.shtml

Weather Conditions
Carlsbad Weather Watch:
(505) 885-1848

Road Conditions
New Mexico: (800) 432-4269
Texas: (800) 452-9292.

**Emergency:
call 911.**

Greetings!

Welcome to Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. Carlsbad Caverns National Park, a World Heritage Site since 1995, features a spectacular cave system of highly decorated chambers. Guadalupe Mountains National Park protects one of the world's best examples of a fossilized reef. Both parks are located within the Chihuahuan Desert, a fascinating place to explore desert life.

Spring and Summer bring their own special rewards. With the returning warmth comes an increase in the variety of plants and animals that one can see in the parks. Some of the most enjoyable wildlife to watch are the bats of Carlsbad Caverns. Batflight evening programs are offered each evening mid-May to mid-October. Times vary each evening so check with a ranger or call 505-785-3012 for current showtimes.

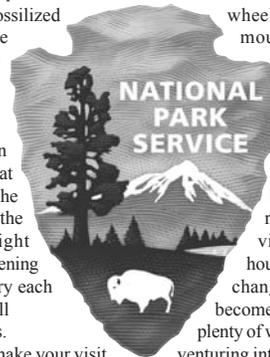
The Park staff are here to help make your visit a truly memorable event. They will be happy to help you plan your visit and provide information. Guided tours at Carlsbad Caverns can enrich your park experience. These tours offer a variety of caving

experiences, from easy lantern tours to challenging trips involving crawling and squeezing through tight passages.

Guadalupe Mountains National Park has over 80 miles of hiking trails to explore, ranging from wheelchair accessible paths to strenuous mountain hikes, including an 8.4 mile roundtrip hike to Texas' highest mountain, Guadalupe Peak (8,749').

As you travel and spend time in the area, please remember to keep safety in mind. Deer and other wildlife are plentiful—enjoy watching wildlife, but remember they often move across roads, especially in the evenings; be vigilant while driving during twilight hours. Hikers should be prepared for rapidly changing weather conditions. Hikers can become dehydrated in our dry climate; carry plenty of water. Always check with a ranger before venturing into the backcountry.

We are wholeheartedly committed to our mission of preserving and providing for the enjoyment of our nation's most outstanding treasures. We wish you a rewarding experience in every way.



John Benjamin
Superintendent
Carlsbad Caverns National Park

John V. Lujan
Superintendent
Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Thank You, Volunteers!

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the dedicated effort and talent that volunteers have brought to Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. Volunteers play a vital role in fulfilling our mission of preserving our natural and cultural heritage and sharing that heritage with the visiting public. Volunteers do everything from staffing the information desk, roving interpretation, patrolling surface and cave trails, to trail maintenance, research, cave restoration, and more. To become a volunteer contact...

Carlsbad Caverns
Jason Richards
(505) 785-3144

Guadalupe Mountains
Doug Buehler
(915) 828-3251 x105

Traveling with A Pet?

On a warm day the temperature inside a car can kill a pet. Do not leave an animal unattended; the kennel is the only safe place for your pet.

At **Carlsbad Caverns**, pets are not permitted in the cave or at bat flight programs; during the day your pet may be cared for at the kennel for a small fee. A citation can be issued if animals are left in vehicles when ambient air temperatures are 70° Fahrenheit (21° Celsius) or higher.

At **Guadalupe Mountains**, pets are not allowed on trails, in the backcountry, in buildings, or at evening programs; they are permitted in the campground. In any national park, your pet must be physically restrained at all times.

Junior and Senior Ranger Programs

Many national parks across America offer a Junior Ranger program for children to encourage interest in their national parks and to promote a sense of stewardship and ownership for these special places that they come to visit. This self-paced educational program allows the participant to earn a patch and/or certificate upon completion of required activities that teach the children about the park resources. Age appropriate activities are included in the Junior Ranger booklet, typically for pre-kindergarten through upper elementary-aged children.

Senior Ranger programs are a new development, currently available at limited locations. Aimed at an audience that enjoys a challenge and wants to use an activity book to learn about the park and help plan their visit. Participants earn a badge and a certificate as well. A Senior Ranger program is available at Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

At Carlsbad Caverns, the Junior Ranger program offers activities to teach about the resources both above ground and below the surface (including plant and animal life of the desert, cave features, and history of the park). Younger children have opportunities to color and draw, find specified objects on a visual scavenger hunt, use their senses to experience their surroundings, and complete games. Older children have opportunities to sequence events, complete word searches, and write stories and poems. Each activity in the booklet is an optional activity depending on interest and age-level. Once the booklet is checked by a park ranger, the participant is presented a Carlsbad Caverns National Park Junior Ranger patch.

The Junior Ranger booklet is available through the Carlsbad Caverns Guadalupe Mountains Association bookstore, located in the visitor center at the park. There is a charge of \$1.00 to participate in

the program, which includes the booklet and patch (given upon completion of the activities). Kids of any age may participate.

At Guadalupe Mountains, participants work through a separate activity booklet and visit points of interest within the park. The booklet accommodates families of varying travel plans. Many of the activities can be completed in the Pine Springs Visitor Center and Museum. Children who complete three activities earn a badge and certificate, while those who do six activities earn a patch in addition to the badge and certificate. There is no charge for participation in the program, but donations are always welcome.

Senior Ranger books are available at the Pine Springs Visitor Center. Activities include visiting sites, learning about the parks history, geology, flora and fauna. Upon completion, participants earn a badge and a certificate.

From the CCGMA Bookstore

The Carlsbad Caverns Guadalupe Mountains Association (CCGMA) is a private, nonprofit organization whose main objectives are to provide interpretation for the park visitor and to support the purposes and mission of the National Park Service at Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, and the lands related to them in New Mexico and West Texas since 1957. To date, CCGMA has donated over \$2.7 million to both Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. The goals of CCGMA are accomplished through educational programs using a variety of educational media and scientific investigations resulting in a greater appreciation of those resources being conserved for this and future generations. CCGMA has 3 retail bookstore outlets located at the Carlsbad Caverns, the Guadalupe Mountains, and the Administration office building located in the city of Carlsbad

Books may also be purchased by mail or online.

PO Box 1417
Carlsbad, NM 88221
(505) 785-2486
(505) 785-2318 FAX
www.ccgma.org

Consider joining CCGMA. As a member you will receive a 15 percent discount on all purchases. This discount is extended to several cooperating associations of other national parks as well. You will also receive the CCGMA newsletter and the Visitor Guide for Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks (2 issues a year). In addition to these benefits you will receive a free book on the work of artist Clark Cox or a coffee mug. Most importantly, your contribution helps further our mission of providing aid to these parks.

Membership (1 year) \$25.00

The Guadalupes \$ 4.00
Stories from Stones \$ 7.95
Trails of the Guadalupes \$ 5.00
Carlsbad Caverns National Park:
Worlds of Wonder \$ 6.95
Jim White's Own Story \$ 5.95

Purchases may be made by credit card or check. Include your address and daytime phone number. If ordering by credit card include the card number, the date of expiration, and the signature of the cardholder. The following cards are accepted: American Express, Discover, MasterCard, and Visa. Make checks payable to CCGMA.

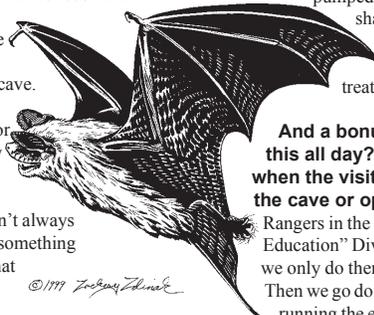
Shipping and handling charges for book orders are as follows:

\$4.00 for purchases up to \$15.00
\$5.00 for purchases \$16-30.00
\$6.00 for purchases \$31-50.00

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9. Where are the bats?

Bats usually only hang out at Carlsbad Caverns from April to October. They sleep during the day in various places. Our Mexican Freetail roost in Bat Cave, which is a room near the entrance. The Fringed and Cave Myotis roost at Lake of the Clouds, the deepest part of the cave. Other bats may use parts of the cave, or other caves, crevices, or trees in the park. Bats generally don't roost in the Big Room. A huge pile of guano near the Bottomless Pit tells us this wasn't always true. At some point in the past, something about the Big Room changed that caused the bats to stop roosting there. Since the guano has been dated at around 44,000 years, presumably it wasn't human presence.



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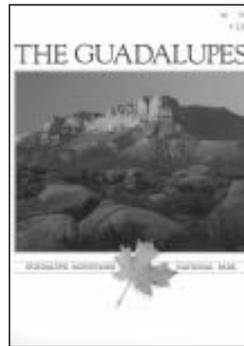
question, but as you can see by its inclusion in this list it's on a lot of people's minds. The sewage is pumped through pipes in the elevator shaft to the surface where it joins the rest of the park sewage on its journey to the treatment pond.

And a bonus question: Do you do this all day? (This is usually asked when the visitor sees a ranger roving the cave or operating the elevator.)

Rangers in the "Interpretation and Education" Division do a lot of things, but we only do them for an hour or two at a time. Then we go do something else. Besides running the elevator and roving the cave, we also lead King's Palace tours, candlelight tours, and caving tours. We give talks, slide programs, and guided walks. You'll see us at the entrance of the cave taking tickets and giving orientation talks. We work at the information desk. Occasionally we write something. Oh yes, we also answer questions.

10. Where does the sewage from the Underground Rest Area go?

People sometimes seem embarrassed to ask this



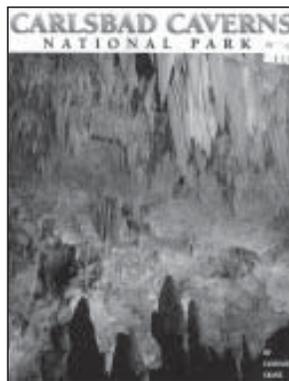
This picture book provides a general overview of Guadalupe Mountains National Park history, biodiversity, and geology. Full color photography throughout. 32 pages, 8.5x11 in. **\$4.00**



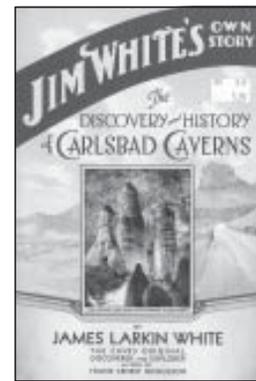
A thorough, but still accessible, discussion on the Guadalupe Mountains' geology. Includes sections on cave and speleothem formation. Color photography, 40 pages, 8.5x11 inches. **\$7.95**



More than just a hiking guide, this book also will introduce the reader to the area's cultural and natural history. Black and White photography plus trail maps, 55 pages, 5.5x8.5 inches. **\$5.00**



This book covers the formation of the Guadalupe Mountains, the creation and discovery of Carlsbad Cavern, history, bats, and Lechugilla Cave. Color photography, 56 pages, 9x12 inches. **\$6.95**



In this book Jim White tells of his initial discovery and early adventures in Carlsbad Cavern. Numerous historic black and white photos, 32 pages, 6x9.5 inches. **\$5.95**

Come Back in December for One-of-a-Kind Tours and Events

Though outside temperatures were in the 70s, winter was the theme for several special events held at Carlsbad Caverns in December. Rangers led additional tours of the Natural Entrance and the King's Palace, reenacted the Rock of Ages tour, and presented several surface programs.

Special Natural Entrance and King's Palace tours were led with lantern light, providing a historic feeling of being the first explorers to the cave. A tour of the King's Palace was also offered *en español* for those visitors fluent in Spanish. The costumed reenactment of the Rock of Ages tour led visitors through time as they learned current theories about cave exploration, cave geology and cave research. Complementing these tours, nature walks, power point presentations, and kids' crafts were also conducted.

Cookies and cocoa were provided by the parks' cooperating association, CCGMA. Together, refreshments, talks of migratory animals, and living history tours, Carlsbad Caverns truly became a winter wonderland in 2005. We plan to continue these events next year, so please join us in December for Winter Week 2006!

Carlsbad Caverns

Tour the Main Cave...

Spring, Fall, & Winter Hours

Natural Entrance	8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Big Room	8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Summer Hours

(Memorial Day—Labor Day)

Natural Entrance	8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Big Room	8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Fees

Entrance Fees

		Audio Guide
Adults—age 16 and over	\$6.00	plus \$3.00
Children—age 6 to 15	\$3.00	plus \$3.00
Children—age 5 and under	free	plus \$3.00

The National Parks Pass, Golden Age Passport, Golden Eagle Passport, and Golden Access Passport all cover the basic entrance fee.

Entrance fee applies to self-guided tours. Guided tours require an additional fee.

All fees and tours are subject to change at any time.

Reservations

We recommend that you make reservations for guided tours at least six weeks in advance. Some tours fill quickly. Reservations are not necessary for self-guided tours. To make reservations call the National Park Reservation System at:

Reservations	(800) 967-CAVE (2283)
TDD	(888) 530-9796
Cancellations	(800) 388-2733

Have a Safe Tour

Cave temperature is 56° F (13° C) year-round. A light jacket or sweater and good walking shoes are recommended. Do not wear sandals. For your safety:

- Stay on the paved trail.
- Supervise children closely; children under age 16 must remain with an adult at all times.
- Ask park rangers for help.
- Take prescribed medications with you.
- High humidity in the cave can affect respiratory problems; bring your **inhaler** just in case.
- If you are **DIABETIC**, be sure you have eaten enough calories.
- Leave your baby stroller in the car; child-carrying backpacks are recommended.
- Leave your pet at the kennel, not in your car.

Protect the Cave

- Never touch, tap, or handle the cave formations; the oils on your skin damage the formations.
- Never take gum, food, or drinks into the cave. Water only.
- Never use tobacco of any kind in the cave.
- Never throw coins or other objects into the pools.

Photography

Photography is permitted on most tours; however, please use good etiquette. Warn those around you before you flash, keep tripods on the trail, and do not use the rocks as your personal tripod. Video cameras are permitted on the Big Room, Natural Entrance, and King's Palace tours. Please use caution and do not use the ultra-bright lights available on some cameras. One place photography is not allowed is at the Bat Flight Programs offered from mid-May to mid-October.



Cavern Supply Company



Cavern Supply Company



Cavern Supply Company

Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route

Length: 1.25 miles, 1 hour
Fee: Entrance fee

This hike is similar to walking into a steep canyon (a descent of about 800 feet in one mile). It is recommended only for those physically fit and healthy; sturdy footwear required. Highlights include the Natural Entrance, Devil's Spring, Whale's Mouth, and Iceberg Rock.

Rent the Cavern Audio Guide!

This guide is available for \$3.00 and is essential for both self-guided tours. It offers commentary by park rangers, researchers, and others who are knowledgeable about the cave's science and history.

Big Room Self-Guided Route

Length: 1.25 miles, 1.5 hours
Fee: Entrance fee

Descend by elevator to start the tour in the Underground Rest Area. The non-skid trail is paved and mostly level, although there are a couple of short, steep hills. All visitors to Carlsbad Cavern should experience this tour. Highlights include the Lion's Tail, Hall of Giants, Bottomless Pit, and Rock of Ages. This trail is partially accessible to visitors using wheelchairs, with assistance. The park does not provide wheelchairs. This trail can be accessed after hiking the 1.25 mile Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route.

King's Palace Guided Tour

Length: 1 mile, 1.5 hours
Fee: Entrance fee and \$8.00 Tour Ticket

Tours depart from the Underground Rest Area. Tickets may be purchased at the visitor center; however, reservations are recommended (call ahead). You will visit four highly decorated chambers: King's Palace, Papoose Room, Queen's Chamber, and Green Lake Room. The tour guide will turn out the lights for a blackout experience. The trail is paved; however, there is a steep hill that you must walk down and then back up.

Surface Activities

Services

Facilities include a visitor center, exhibits, bookstore, restaurant, gift shop, and kennel service. Ranger programs are offered daily. Other activities include:

Nature Trail

This one-mile paved, partially accessible trail begins near the visitor center and highlights desert plants.

Scenic Drive

A one-hour drive through the Chihuahuan Desert, this 9.5-mile gravel road is suitable for most vehicles except trailers and motor homes. Brochures are available for 50 cents. The Scenic Drive is open 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. mid-May to mid-October. It is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. mid-October to mid-May. These hours are subject to change.

Rattlesnake Springs

This historic oasis includes a picnic area, shade trees, restrooms, and excellent bird watching. Located 5.5 miles south of White's City on U.S. Highway 62/180, then 2.5 miles west on a signed county road. Day use only.

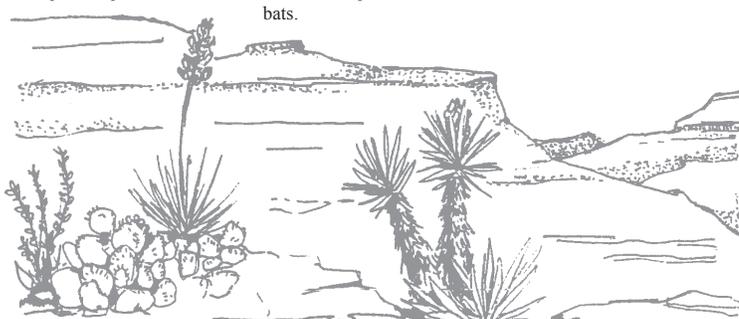
Hiking & Camping

The park's wilderness offers day hikes and backcountry camping (permit required). Rangers at the visitor center can provide free permits, trail and weather information, and backcountry camping tips. The bookstore sells topographic maps, which are considered essential for desert hiking.

Bat Flight Programs (Summer Only)

A few hundred thousand bats fly from Carlsbad Caverns each evening from mid-May until the bats migrate to Mexico sometime in mid-October. The ranger program generally begins each evening 30 to 60 minutes before sunset at the park amphitheater,

though weather and lightning can cause cancellation of the program. Check at the Visitor Center for the exact time the program starts. **No Cameras** are allowed as flash photography may be a disturbance to the bats. This rule is strictly enforced for protection of the bats.



Carlsbad Caverns

...or try something different!



Left Hand Tunnel

On this lantern-lit tour your guide will highlight cavern history, formations, cave pools, and Permian Age fossils. This is the easiest of the adventure tours on unpaved trails. Be aware that the dirt trail winds over small uneven or slippery slopes and careful footing is required to avoid cavern pools and fragile formations. Lanterns are provided. Tour departs from the visitor center lobby.



Slaughter Canyon Cave

This moderately strenuous tour is through a well-decorated backcountry cave. It is mandatory for each person to bring a strong battery-powered flashlight with fresh batteries. Penlights are not sufficient. The route is slippery, muddy, and may require an ascent of a 15-foot slope using a knotted rope.

Do not drive to the visitor center for this cave tour.

Allow plenty of time to drive to Slaughter Canyon and 45 minutes for the steep and strenuous half-mile hike to the cave entrance. Attempt this hike only if you are in good health.

Carry water—weather may be very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Stay on the trail and wear sturdy hiking shoes. *Tours depart from the cave entrance at the scheduled time.*



Lower Cave

This moderately strenuous tour begins with a ranger supervised descent down a 10-foot flowstone slope using a knotted rope, followed by a 30-foot series of three ladders. Bring gloves and four AA alkaline batteries per person. The park provides helmets, headlamps and optional kneepads. Tour departs from the visitor center lobby. You will see evidence of early exploration, cave pools, and beautiful formations.



Hall of the White Giant

This is a strenuous, challenging tour to a remote chamber in Carlsbad Cavern. You will be required to crawl long distances, squeeze through tight crevices, and climb up slippery passages. Bring gloves and four AA batteries per person. We provide helmets, headlamps, and kneepads. Tour departs from the visitor center lobby.



Spider Cave

On this strenuous tour you can expect tight crawls, canyon-like passages, and bizarre formations. Bring gloves and four new AA batteries. The park provides helmets, headlamps, and kneepads. The tour departs from the Visitor Center for a short drive and then a short hike to the cave. Bring water for the hike.

**Cave Tour
Reservations:
1-800-967-2283**

Cave Watch

Report illegal activities such as:

- Graffiti
- Littering-including throwing items in cave pools
- Touching/Breaking cave formations
- Visitors traveling off of paved trails

Dial 3030 from any park phone or contact the nearest Park Ranger.

Tour	Trail Surface	Offered	Departure Time	Adult Fee	Age Limit	Tour Length	Group Size
King's Palace	Paved trail; 80' hill must be climbed on return trip	Daily	Fall-Spring 10 & 2 Summer 10,11, 2 & 3	Adults \$8 Golden Age \$4 Golden Access \$4 Children (6-15) \$4 Children (4-5) Free	4	1.5 hours	75
Left Hand Tunnel	Packed dirt trail	Daily	9:00 am	\$7.00 and General Admission Ticket	6	2 hours	15
Slaughter Canyon Cave	Strenuous climb required to reach cave entrance. Trail in cave is slippery, uneven, and rocky	Saturday and Sunday (Tours offered daily in summer)	10:00 a.m.	\$15.00	6	2 hours	25
Lower Cave	Must negotiate fifty feet of ladders, variable dirt trails, might get dirty	Monday through Friday	1:00 pm	\$20.00 and General Admission Ticket	12	3 hours	12
Wild Caving – kneepads required!							
Hall of the White Giant	Climbing and crawling, tight squeezes, drop-offs, will get dirty	Saturday	1:00 pm	\$20.00 and General Admission Ticket	12	4 hours	8
Spider Cave	Climbing and crawling, tight squeezes, drop-offs, will get dirty	Sunday	1:00 pm	\$20.00	12	4 hours	8

Guadalupe Mountains



Rachele Riley



Rachele Riley



John Cwiklik

Plan Your Trip Wisely!

Facilities and services within and near Guadalupe Mountains National Park are extremely limited. The nearest gasoline stations are 32 miles west or 35 miles east. There is no campstore; bring everything you need with you.

Information and exhibits

Headquarters Visitor Center

Elevation 5,740'. On U.S. Highway 62/180, 55 miles southwest of Carlsbad and 110 miles east of El Paso. Open every day except Christmas. Open Memorial Day to Labor Day 8:00 A.M.- 6:00 P.M.; Labor Day to Memorial Day 8:00 A.M.- 4:30 P.M. Information, natural history museum, introductory slide program.

Frijole Ranch History Museum

The ranch house features exhibits describing historic and current use of the Guadalupe. Grounds include a picnic area near a spring shaded by large oak trees. Restroom available. Staffed intermittently.

McKittrick Canyon

Highway entrance gate is open 8:00 A.M.- 4:30 P.M., Mountain Standard Time; 8:00 A.M.- 6:00 P.M. Mountain Daylight Savings Time. Closing time changes when Daylight Savings Time begins and ends. Restrooms, outdoor exhibits, slide program.

Dog Canyon

This secluded, forested canyon on the north side of the park is a great place to begin a backpacking trip for those coming through Carlsbad.

Ranger Station and Campground

Located at the end of New Mexico Highway 137, 70 miles from Carlsbad and 110 miles from Park Headquarters, at an elevation of 6,290 feet. The campground has nine tent sites and four RV spaces.

Camping

Water and restrooms are available; but there are no showers, RV hookups, or dump stations. The fee is \$8.00 per night, per site, \$4.00 with a Golden Age or Golden Access Passport. No wood or charcoal fires are permitted; camp stoves are allowed.

Pine Springs Campground

Located near the Headquarters Visitor Center, there are twenty tent and nineteen RV campsites available on a first-come, first-served basis. Two group campsites are available for groups of 10-20 people. Reservations (for group sites only) can be made by phoning (915) 828-3251.

Backpacking

Eighty-five miles of trails lead through forests, canyons, and the desert. A free permit is required if you plan to spend a night in the backcountry. Permits are issued at the Pine Springs Visitor Center and the Dog Canyon Ranger Station. Wood and charcoal fires are prohibited. Camp stoves are allowed. Pack out all your trash. Pets are not allowed on park trails. Firearms are not permitted within the park.

Preparation is the key to an enjoyable backpacking trip. Be prepared for changing weather conditions. Carry plenty of water—there are no water sources in the backcountry. Topographic maps, hikers' guides, and information can be found at the Pine Springs Visitor Center and the Dog Canyon Ranger Station.

Day Hikes at Dog Canyon

Indian Meadow Nature Loop

Easy. 0.6 miles roundtrip. A guide booklet describes ecology and geology.

Marcus Overlook

Moderate. 4.6 miles roundtrip. Follow the Bush Mountain Trail to the ridge-top for a view into West Dog Canyon. Trail climbs 800 feet in elevation.

Lost Peak

Strenuous. 6.4 miles roundtrip. Climb out of Dog Canyon on the Tejas Trail to visit the conifer forest above. Outstanding views from Lost Peak. Trail climbs 1,500 feet in elevation.

Day Hikes

Entrance Fees (\$3.00 per person 16 years and older) can be paid at trailheads. Good for one week.

Trail-Head	Trail	Roundtrip length	Description
Visitor Center	Pinery Trail	0.75 mile	Easy. Discover the desert as you walk to the ruins of the Pinery, a stagecoach station on the Butterfield Overland Mail Route in 1858. Trailside exhibits; wheelchair accessible .
Pine Springs Campground	Guadalupe Peak Trail	8.4 miles	Strenuous. Hike to the "Top of Texas" at 8,749 feet, for spectacular views. Trail climbs 3,000 feet in elevation. Avoid the peak during high winds and thunderstorms.
	Devil's Hall Trail	4.2 miles	Moderate. Rocky hike in Pine Spring Canyon to the Hikers' Staircase and Devil's Hall. After the first mile the trail drops into the wash. Turn left and follow the canyon bottom to Devil's Hall, where a sign marks the end of the trail.
	The Bowl	9.1 miles	Strenuous. The Bowl shelters a high country conifer forest. Recommended route: Tejas Trail to Pine Top, Bowl Trail to Hunter Peak, Bear Canyon Trail, Frijole Trail back to the campground. Trail climbs 2,500 feet in elevation.
	El Capitan Trail	11.3 miles	Strenuous. Desert lovers will appreciate the rocky arroyos and open vistas while skirting along the base of El Capitan. Recommended Route: El Capitan Trail, Salt Basin Overlook Trail, and return on the El Capitan Trail. Beyond the Salt Basin Overlook the El Capitan Trail continues to Williams Ranch, an additional 4.7 miles one-way.
Frijole Ranch	Smith Springs Loop Trail	2.3 miles	Moderate. Look for birds, deer, and elk as you pass Manzanita Spring on the way to the shady oasis of Smith Spring. Please do not drink the water or wade in the springs. The first 0.2 miles to Manzanita Springs is wheelchair accessible .
McKittrick Canyon	McKittrick Canyon Trail	4.8 miles	Moderate. Follow an intermittent stream through the desert and canyon woodlands to the historic Pratt Cabin. A guidebook is available at the trailhead. One mile beyond the Pratt Cabin is the Grotto Picnic Area and Hunter Line Cabin. Please do not drink the water or wade in the creek. To protect this fragile environment, you are required to stay on the trail.
	McKittrick Nature Loop	0.9 miles	Moderate. Climb the foothills and learn about the natural history of the Chihuahuan Desert. Trailside exhibits.
	Permian Reef Trail	8.4 miles	Strenuous. For serious geology buffs, this trail has stop markers that can be used with a geology guidebook sold at the Visitor Center. There are excellent views into McKittrick Canyon from the ridgetop. Trail climbs 2,000 feet in elevation.

Hike safely...

- There is no water available along park trails, so be sure to bring plenty with you. One gallon per person per day is recommended.
- Trails are rocky—wear sturdy shoes.
- Carry a trail map.
- Pack warm clothing and rain gear; sudden weather changes are common.

Protect the park

- Stay on trails; don't cut across switchbacks or create new trails.
- Carry out all trash, including cigarette butts.
- Report any trail hazards to the visitor center.
- Collecting of natural, historic, or prehistoric objects is not allowed.

Weather	Temperatures (F.) Average		Rainfall Average
	High	Low	Inches
Jan	53	30	1.04
Feb	58	35	1.04
March	63	38	0.87
April	71	46	0.57
May	78	55	1.26
June	88	63	1.48
July	87	63	3.08
Aug	84	62	3.77
Sept	78	57	5.22
Oct	71	49	1.41
Nov	61	38	0.65
Dec	57	33	0.67

Average annual precipitation is 21.06 inches.
Pine Springs Weather Station, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, elevation 5,500'.

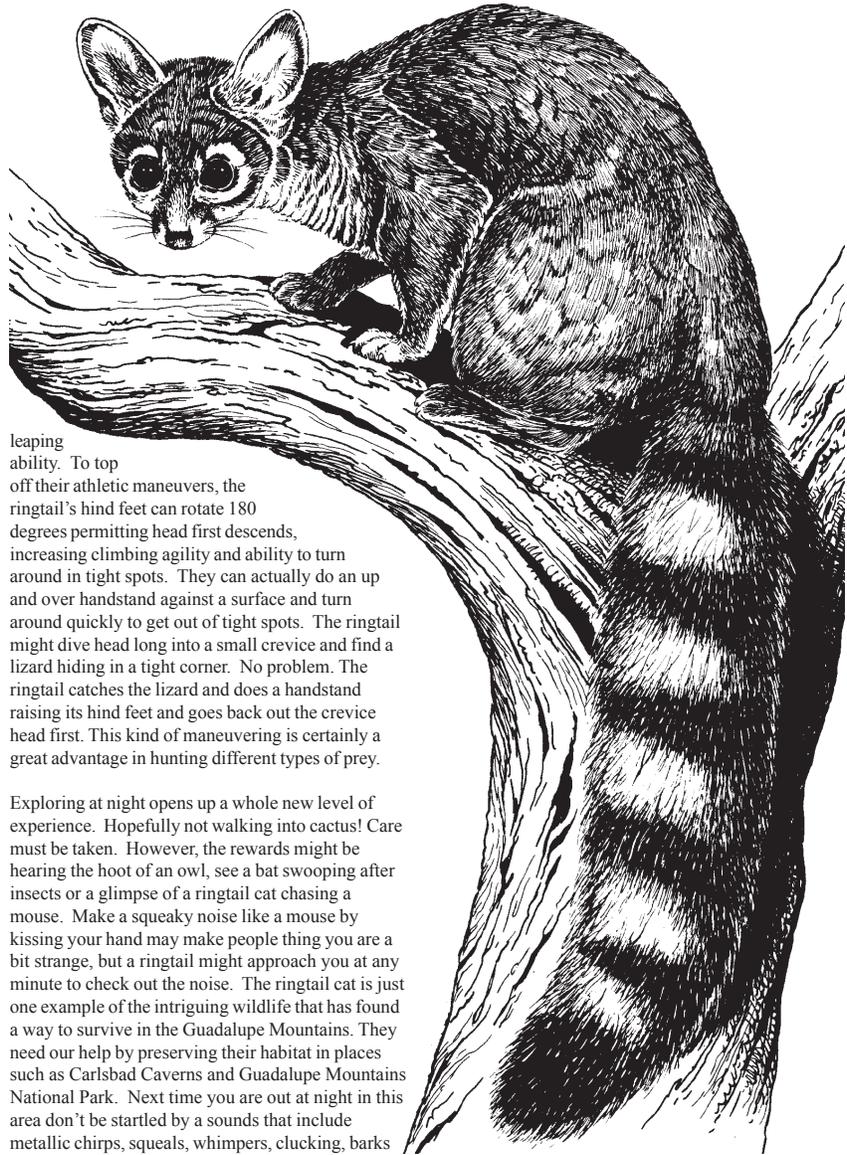
Nighttime Gymnasts

by Doug Buehler

In the dark, sounds seem amplified, and the imagination quickly makes up for any deficiencies in human night vision. At night, outside my tent, a scratching sound arouses my curiosity. Wondering what caused the noise I stick my head through the tent flap opening. I catch a glimpse of a catlike animal with a long, bushy, ringed tail as it scampers up a tree. At first I thought it was a raccoon, but the face was unlike any raccoon I have ever seen. It was a ringtail cat; a somewhat confused animal that seems to be part fox and part raccoon. It is actually part of the raccoon family and not confused at all. It is seldom seen because of its living habits; however it is a fascinating survivor in the park.

Even though ringtail cats are fairly common one does not see them often since their primary time of activity is at night. Think about being out at night in the desert. Being active at night can have some real benefits. It is cooler at night and more comfortable in the desert. It is harder for predators to see you at night. A host of potential prey is more active at night, especially rodents. In fact the ringtail can eat quite a variety of food including berries, mice, pack rats, small birds, lizards, snakes, and insects. Many times a visitor will ask what is the reddish looking scat in the trails of the park. Most of the time it is from ringtails with the red color coming from berries and fruit it has eaten. This smorgasbord of food the ringtail can eat enables it to survive in a harsh environment. The more flexible one is about sources of food the greater the chance of survival. What would you be willing to eat in a survival situations? Maybe the same things as a ringtail cat.

The ringtail is truly a champion gymnast in the animal world. The raccoon-like tail is actually longer than its body. The tail helps the ringtail keep its balance more readily as it races across uneven surfaces and scurries up trees. It can also fluff the tail up and curl it above its body to appear larger and scary when facing predators such as bobcats and mountain lions. Curling up with their tail adds warmth on cold winter days. Its claws are partly retractable and aid in gripping surfaces. The ringtail is so acrobatic they can "chimney" up vertical cracks by ricocheting from wall to wall with their great



leaping ability. To top off their athletic maneuvers, the ringtail's hind feet can rotate 180 degrees permitting head first descends, increasing climbing agility and ability to turn around in tight spots. They can actually do an up and over handstand against a surface and turn around quickly to get out of tight spots. The ringtail might dive head long into a small crevice and find a lizard hiding in a tight corner. No problem. The ringtail catches the lizard and does a handstand raising its hind feet and goes back out the crevice head first. This kind of maneuvering is certainly a great advantage in hunting different types of prey.

Exploring at night opens up a whole new level of experience. Hopefully not walking into cactus! Care must be taken. However, the rewards might be hearing the hoot of an owl, see a bat swooping after insects or a glimpse of a ringtail cat chasing a mouse. Make a squeaky noise like a mouse by kissing your hand may make people think you are a bit strange, but a ringtail might approach you at any minute to check out the noise. The ringtail cat is just one example of the intriguing wildlife that has found a way to survive in the Guadalupe Mountains. They need our help by preserving their habitat in places such as Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Next time you are out at night in this area don't be startled by a sounds that include metallic chirps, squeals, whimpers, clucking, barks and various growls; it might just be a ringtail cat letting you know it is in the area.

Minimum Impact Camping

With more and more visitors coming into the national parks each year, it becomes increasingly more important to learn and practice minimum impact ethics. Though we may be lucky enough to enjoy some moments of solitude while hiking or camping, we must not forget that hundreds of others will come to experience the same. Our overwhelming numbers alone make it tough to preserve and protect those resources we love so much. Please follow these simple principles of Leave No Trace:

Plan Ahead and Prepare

Appropriate equipment, understanding the terrain you travel through, and leaving enough time to reach your destination are ways of reducing impact on the land. Proper protection from wind, for example, means you won't be forced to use native materials to build unnecessary windbreaks. Eliminating (by recycling) unnecessary packaging of food products (prior to leaving) reduces the potential for litter on trails or at campsites.

Camp and Travel on Durable Surfaces

The desert is fragile and recovers from human impact much more slowly than many other ecosystems. Roads, trails and campgrounds leave lasting scars. To minimize these scars, designated campgrounds with hardened tent pads have been established in the wilderness of Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Respect the land—do not camp outside these designated areas. When off-trail, use durable surfaces—step lightly. Travel on established trails between campsites, don't make new ones.

Pack It In, Pack It Out

What would seem a common sense principle is often very misunderstood. Pack out not only your inorganic waste or trash, but also organic waste or garbage. A clear distinction should be made between native, natural, and beneficial. Garbage such as peanut shells, apple cores, or orange peels, though natural, are not native and therefore not necessarily beneficial. The arid climate means they decompose slowly, they may be harmful to wildlife and are unsightly. If your pack is light, help by packing out the litter left by others.

Leave What You Find

All plants, animals, rocks, minerals, cultural/historical sites and artifacts are strictly protected and will remain undisturbed. Don't let a temptation to take something stand in the way of preservation and protection of resources. Avoid disturbing wildlife. Our entry into the wilderness should not be at their expense.

Protect and Conserve Water Resources

Water is a precious and finite resource in Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Recognized as such, it is strictly prohibited to disturb any water source in any way. As you enter the back country, be prepared by carrying at least one gallon of water per person per day, and do not carry a filter to take advantage of springs or seeps.

Area Attractions



Brantley Lake State Park

(505) 457-2384
Open all year—24 hours/day.
Wheelchair accessible.

Fees

Day Use Only—\$5.00/vehicle
Camping—\$14.00/night
(\$10.00 fee for each additional vehicle driven into same site)
Primitive Camping Area—\$8.00 per vehicle/night

Located 12 miles north of Carlsbad on U.S. 285, the campground has 51 sites with water and RV electric hookups (a few with sewer), a dump station, playground, restroom with hot showers, shelters, tables, and grills.

Other facilities include picnic areas with sheltered tables and grills, playground, a fishing dock, boat ramps with docks, and a visitor center.

Living Desert State Park

(505) 887-5516
Open daily except December 25.
Wheelchair accessible.

Fees

Ages 13 and up—\$5.00
Children 7 to 12—\$3.00
Children 6 and under—free
Group(20+) discounts available.

Winter Hours

Labor Day to Memorial Day
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Last tour entry—3:30 p.m.



Summer Hours

Memorial Day to Labor Day
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Last tour entry—6:30 p.m.

Come face to face with a mountain lion at this unique zoo and botanical garden offering an opportunity to experience the Chihuahuan Desert first-hand. See a large collection of live animals, including the rare Mexican gray wolf, and the roadrunner, New Mexico's state bird. There is also an unusual collection of cacti and other succulents from around the world.

The park is located high atop the Ocotillo Hills overlooking the northwest edge of Carlsbad, just off Highway 285 and features exhibits, an art gallery, gift shop, and refreshments.

Lincoln National Forest

(505) 885-4181

The forest encompasses 285,000 acres for hiking, caving, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, hunting and sightseeing.

Maps are available at the Guadalupe Ranger District Office located in the Federal Building, 114 S. Halagueno, Room 159, in Carlsbad.

Sitting Bull Falls

Wheelchair accessible.
Day use only—no camping.
Entrance fee—\$5.00 per car.

Seven miles southwest of State Highway 137 on Forest Route 276, this 130 foot falls is one of the highest in New Mexico. Picnic area, trails, and restroom.

Five Points Vista

Eleven miles south of State Highway 137 on Forest Route 540. A panoramic view of the desert from the top of the Guadalupe Mountains. Interpretive signs explain natural features.

