



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

Pinnacles  
National Monument

5000 Hwy 146  
Paicines, CA 95043

(831) 389-4485 phone  
(831) 389-4489 fax  
[www.nps.gov/pinn](http://www.nps.gov/pinn)

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## **Pinnacles National Monument News Release**

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For Immediate Release

Carl Brenner, Resource Education (831) 389 - 4485

### **Opening of the Bear Gulch Cave**

The Bear Gulch Cave at Pinnacles National Monument will be completely open for the last seven days of October (Tues. 25<sup>th</sup> through Monday 31<sup>st</sup>). After October 31<sup>st</sup>, only the lower half of the cave will remain open. The upper portion may open for the upcoming weekend if the bats have vacated by the time park biologists conduct their survey Friday. Check the park's web page or call the Bear Gulch Visitor Center for this weekend's update.

2005 marks the 9<sup>th</sup> season for the maternity colony of Townsend Big-eared bats at Pinnacles National Monument. Though it is difficult to obtain the exact number in maternity colony, park biologists have counted approximately 378 during their hibernation.

In October of 2004, the park completed a set of gates allowing the lower section of the cave to be enjoyed for approximately 10 months of the year. The entire cave is open each March and October for at least one and up to four weeks, depending on the presence of the Townsend's Big-eared bat colony. The bats, which are listed by the state of California as a species of special concern, raise their young (pups) and hibernate in the cave. The entire cave will be closed from May 15th through July 15th to allow the bats to raise their young. After July 15th, the lower half of the cave will reopen. These dates are tentative depending on the activity of the bats.

When visiting the cave, please remember that it is the home of a sensitive species. To avoid disturbing the bats, please keep voices down and refrain from flash photography. If you happen to see a bat in either of the park's caves, please do not disturb it or shine your light directly on it.

The Bear Gulch Cave (closer to the east entrance of the park) and the Balconies Cave (closer to the west entrance) both offer the opportunity to explore a talus cave. Please remember to bring flashlights and

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wear sturdy shoes. Seasonal streams run through both caves, and the rocks can be slippery when the stream is flowing.

For more information please contact the Bear Gulch Visitor Center at (831) 389-4485 ext. 0 or visit our web pages at: [www.nps.gov/pinn](http://www.nps.gov/pinn) When visiting Pinnacles National Monument, please be aware that no concession services or gas stations are available in the park.

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