



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Pinnacles
National Monument

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Pinnacles National Monument

News Release

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Opening of the Upper Portion of the Bear Gulch Cave

The Bear Gulch Cave at Pinnacles National Monument will be completely open for the last seven days of October, October 25-31, 2006. After October 31st, only the lower half of the cave will remain open until mid May. The entire cave is open each March and October for approximately one to four weeks, depending on the presence of a colony of Townsend's Big-eared bats. 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 about 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.

2006 marks the 10th season for the maternity colony of Townsend's Big-eared bats at Pinnacles National Monument. The success of this sensitive species reinforces the importance of the closure areas, and the part that all visitors play in ensuring the continuing species success. We thank the climbers and hikers for their patience and support of our efforts to protect our bats at Pinnacles.

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

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