

2004 Trout Rock Bat Counts

by Bob Hoke

The annual bat counts in two of the three major caves in the NSS-owned John Guilday Cave Preserve (Trout Rock) were completed on February 7, 2004. Trout Cave was not counted this year because it is only counted in odd-numbered years to reduce the impact on its small colony of endangered Indiana (Sodalis) bats. Hamilton and New Trout caves are counted annually. The goal is to develop a long-term database that counts the same areas of each cave each year.

The counters in both caves were Dave West, Karen Willmes, Fred Grady, Bob Hoke, and Pat Bingham.

The number of bats in Hamilton was almost identical to last year's count. After increasing during the early years of the count, the population in Hamilton appears to have stabilized at the mid-300s except for the unexplained large counts in 2000 and 2001.

The count in New Trout was lower than normal. One possible reason might be that the weather for several weeks prior to the count was consistently colder than normal and since New Trout always has inflowing cold air in the winter, it is possible some bats went further into the cave seeking warmer temperatures.

Nothing unusual was observed this year except that one bat decided to roost about five feet inside the Hamilton Cave entrance. Bats have been seen in this area in several past counts and it is unclear how any bat in the entrance can survive the lights and noise from cave visitors.

NEW TROUT CAVE - 2004

Area	Pip	Big Brown	Leibi	Little Brown	Total
Entrance Passage	0	9	2	0	11
First Room	0	0	0	0	0
1st to 2nd Room Passage	0	0	0	0	0
Second Room	1	0	0	0	1
Bone Site	0	0	0	0	0
Big Room	10	1	0	6	17
TOTAL	11	10	2	6	29

HAMILTON CAVE - 2004

Area	Pip	L. Brown	Total
Entr to U-survey	7	3	10
U-Survey	9	2	11
Big Slab Room	32	6	38
Mud Ball Room	7	0	7
Big Slab Rm to C-12	62	21	83
C12 to Roselyn Esc.	59	3	62
Below Ros. Esc.	17	5	22
Ros. Esc to Pre-Form Rm	4	2	6
Pre-Formation Room	71	0	71
Formation Room	53	1	54
TOTAL	321	43	364

TOTAL COUNTS BY YEAR

Year	Trout	New Trout	Hamilton
1982	1(?)	22	no count
1983	763	10	no count
1984	567	no count	32
1985	663	21	55
1986	no count	32	58
1987	874	43	101
1988	no count	44	114
1989	779	37	105
1990	no count	56	90
1991	564	37	106
1992	no count	41	161
1993	482	43	190
1994	no count	39	207
1995	593	61	273
1996	no count	58	316
1997	779	60	360
1998	no count	51	292
1999	584	29	381
2000	no count	30	547
2001	621	29	480
2002	no count	22	373
2003	465	48	361
2004	no count	29	364