

2016 Trout Rock Bat Counts

by Keely Owens

See the article text on the next page.

HAMILTON CAVE – 2016

Area	Tri color	Little Brown	Va. Big Ear	Northern Long Ear	Total
Entrance to U-survey	1				1
U-Survey		1			1
Big Slab Room					0
Mud Ball Room					0
Big Slab Room to C-12	1	1			1
C12 to Roselyn Escalator					0
Below Roselyn. Escalator.					0
Ros. Esc. to Pre-Old Room					0
Pre-Old Room					0
Old Room	1 WNS				1
TOTAL	3	2	0	0	5

Note: "WNS" means the bat showed WNS symptoms.

NEW TROUT CAVE – 2016

Area	Tri color	Big Brown	Small Footed	Little Brown	Va. Big Ear	Northern Long Ear	Total
Entrance Passage	3	4	4*	5			16
First Room	1	2		1			4
1st to 2nd Rm	1	1	1				3
Second Room		1		3			4
Bone Site							0
Big Room	1			10			11
TOTAL	6	8	5	19			38

* The counters saw a few bats that looked like Little Browns and had very short arms. Craig Stihler looked at a photo and suggested that these were most likely small-footed bats.

TOTAL COUNTS BY YEAR

Year	Trout		New Trout	Hamilton
	Indiana	Total	Total	Total
1982	1(?)	1(?)	22	no count
1983	21	763	10	no count
1984	14	567	no count	32
1985	2	663	21	55
1986	no count		32	58
1987	14	962	43	101
1988	no count		44	114
1989	19	779	37	105
1990	no count		56	90
1991	10	564	37	106
1992	no count		41	161
1993	12	482	43	190
1994	no count		39	207
1995	26	593	61	273
1996	no count		58	316
1997	24	779	60	360
1998	no count		51	292
1999	19	584	29	381
2000	no count		30	547
2001	24	621	29	480
2002	no count		22	373
2003	25	465	48	361
2004	no count		29	364
2005	95	841	42	562
2006	93	—	22	513
2007	158	764	48	480
2008	no count		27	340
2009	139	543	48	473
2010	82	—	68	30
2011	90	177	40	3
2012	no count		33	3
2013	79	135	30	5
2014	no count		28	5
2015	94	130	37	5
2016	no count		38	5

Note: a partial count was done in Trout in 2006 and 2010. Only the Indiana bat population was counted.

It was an off year, so we did not have a team set up to count Trout. We entered New Trout around 12:45 on Sunday, March 6. Keely had counted New Trout once before, but did not know the route; however Earl knew the route, so we figured we could manage the count (It is a short and straightforward route). However, the bats in New Trout have become more diverse over the years than the usual Tricolor Bats (formerly pipistrelles) and Little Brown Bats that Keely was accustomed to identifying based on leading the Hamilton counts, so we struggled somewhat with bat identification. We spent a good amount of time in New Trout with a bat identification booklet, trying to determine species by such indicators as the length of toe-hair (which can be extremely challenging to measure when a bat is six feet above you and you are trying to balance on a piece of breakdown and not wake it up). In the end, we took some pictures and sent them to Craig Stihler for help in the identification. Craig identified (from photos) some of the small bats we observed as Eastern Small-footed bats, and pointed out that it might be beneficial for the data if we recorded some of our bats with the caveat 'or other myotis', as it can be particularly challenging to tell myotis species apart. His suggestions were duly noted in the count results. An interesting orange parasite (not WNS) was noted on some of the bats in New Trout, which Stihler said is most commonly found on Eastern Small-footed bats. None of the bats in New Trout showed sign of WNS.

We took a brief break before entering Hamilton, getting underground maybe around 3 or 4 in the afternoon. The Hamilton count was straightforward and uneventful, as there (unfortunately) still aren't very many bats in Hamilton. This was Daniel's and Nicole's first cave trip, so they went to the Rosslyn escalator and then turned back with Earl, while Keely, Corey, and Neeka finished the count. There were a total of five bats in Hamilton, one of which showed WNS. The one showing WNS was found in the back of the cave, possibly suggesting that the ones toward the front had already woken up from hibernation and groomed, hiding evidence of WNS even if they had had it.