

GAPING HOLE ILLUMINATED

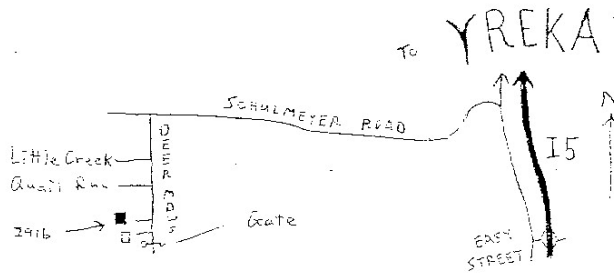
MELANIE IN THE GUADS

The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society, Grotto meetings are held at different locations the fourth Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations are announced in the SAG RAG, Membership dues are \$6 dollars per year and include newsletter subscription, Original material not otherwise noted is copyright to the SAG RAG, Such material may be copied with credit given to the author and the SAG RAG, For use outside of the caving community, please seek the permission of the author or editor first. Send material for publication any time to Bighorn Broeckel, 2916 Deer Meadows Road, Yreka, CA 96097 or <jbroeckel@snowcrest.net>. For more on SAG, check the web site at <<http://www.caves.org/grotto/sag>>.

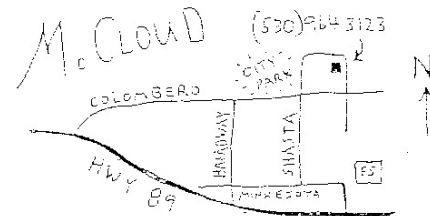
CAVERS CALENDAR 2010

- Jan 22, 2010 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Broeckels in Yreka 530-842-3917.
 Feb 26 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Wolffs' in McCloud (530) 964-3123.
 Apr 10 Cave rescue training with Siskiyou SAR (tentative).
 May Cave rescue training with Lava Beds (date pending).
 July 2-? 2010 KMCTF speleocamp, call Melanie or Steve for mules.
 Aug 2-6 2010 NSS Convention in Vermont.

MAPS TO MEETINGS



JAN 22 - Yreka



FEB 26 - McCloud

SAG RAG SUMMARY By Bill Broeckel

The time has come to produce a small 10-page SAG RAG to save weight and allow for the ballots to ride along for those voting readers. If you receive a ballot, please be sure and return it soon. The votes will be tallied on Jan 22.

I guess I won't be caving for awhile, due to a back problem. The only good thing I can say about it is that it wasn't from a cave-related injury. I would hate to blame the poor caves for this one. Oh the pain. At least I can still work on the newsletter. We are very fortunate to have a great Guadalupe's article from our very own Melanie Jackson. Another installment of Ray Miller's "About Bats" series appears to help us remember the many values of our favorite little flying cave creatures. To top off the ten-pager, I dredged up something from 2008 to describe the two caves found in the Flushing Bush Sink, which is part of the famous Gaping Holes of Siskiyou County. All uncredited photos are mine. Take care out there and watch your backs. **BB**

COVER: Shasta Area Grotto cavers at the walk-in cave entrance at the south end of the Flushing Bush Sink, Gaping Holes, California – 11-8-08.

MINUTES FROM SAG MEETING – November 20, 2009

NOVEMBER SAG MEETING 11-20-09 at Hobson's in Redding. Present: Steve Hobson, Jim & Liz Wolff, Dave Smith, Melanie Jackson, Hans and Leah Stein, Kelly Carbaugh, Reuben Smith, Judy Broeckel, and Vern & Linda Clift.

Meeting called to order by Chairman Jim Wolff at 8:15pm.

Committee Reports: Website: Dave continues to put past issues of the SAG RAG on the website. SAG RAG: submissions discussed. Data Base: status quo. Conservation: Sand Cave barrier seems to have a leak. Ways to mitigate this discussed.

Correspondence Stephanie Searles (NSS) wanted an e-mail address to send the monthly membership update. She was given Jim Wolff's e-mail. Marianne Russo of the Western Cave Conservancy (WCC) through the KMCTF2 Yahoo List says "This year we would like to hold it (WCC meeting) in Redding or elsewhere in the north state. Before we reserve a meeting location and make our other plans we would like to know the approximate level of local interest. The meeting is tentatively planned for January 23 (Saturday) with the 30th as a back-up." If you would be interested in attending please respond to her e-mail address which is mrusso@softcom.net.

Keith D. Wheeland, Chair of the NSS Internal Organizations Committee lists several things we should know, like WNS funding, out-of-state grotto listing, keeping on-line I/O reports current and reported each January, and hosting NSS Conventions (No.)

Old Business: Western Regional 2010 Lava Beds, SAG in charge, nothing new.

New Business: Modoc National Forest has a wildlife biologist, Patty Beuttner, coordinating cave data. She desires our input and help. Melanie Jackson says that the Siskiyou County Search and Rescue (SAR) would like SAG to help with a SAR in-cave training for 2010. Their training weekend is always the second Saturday of the month. Discussion followed. The month selected was April for 2010, October for 2011. LABE rescue training May 2010. Elections: Nominations tonight, ballots will be sent out by Bill Broeckel with the next SAG RAG. July 2-4 (and maybe beyond?) 4th of July weekend Marbles. Mules carry in gear. Let Melanie and Steve know if you want to come, and if you want help from a mule.

Trip reports: Melanie and Wayne traveled to Carlsbad Caverns, saw Virgin Cave, and others.

Upcoming Meetings: Next meeting fourth Friday, 7:30 January 22, 2010 at Bill and Judy Broeckels' in Yreka. February Wolff residence McCloud, 7:30 February 26, 2010 (Cave Conservation).

Meeting adjourned: 9:22 pm. Respectfully submitted by Judy Broeckel.

JB

GROTTO ELECTIONS: If your SAG RAG contains a stamped postcard ballot marked with the official bat logo, that means you are eligible and expected to vote for the 2010 grotto officers. Please return these ballots right away, as results will be counted up at the January 22 grotto meeting. Please vote for the candidates of your choice from the following nominations:

CHAIR:	Steve Hobson or Liz Wolff
VICE CHAIR:	Melanie Jackson or Dave Smith
SECRETARY:	Steve Hobson or Hans Stein
TREASURER:	Steve Hobson
CONSERVATION:	Melanie Jackson or Jim Wolff
SAG RAG EDITOR:	Bill Broeckel

A High Guads Restoration and Carlsbad Caverns Vacation by Melanie Jackson

A place I always wanted to visit for nearly as long as I can remember was Carlsbad Caverns National Park. In October of 2008 a decision was made to see the wondrous caverns in October of 2009. As the High Guads Restoration Group always had a caving trip planned for the last weekend of October that was also to be incorporated into the vacation.

Wayne Cedidla and I set out in my new Subaru Forester on Wednesday Oct. 21 from Sacramento, California and arrived at Texas Camp early Friday afternoon. We drove three days stopping to see the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, AZ, Jim Gray's Petrified Wood Company in Holbrook, AZ and also the Petrified Forest not far from Holbrook.

Texas camp is approximately 36 miles from the town of Carlsbad on a high ridge in the Guadalupe Mountains. There were twelve cavers signed up for this restoration weekend. Upon our arrival Texas Camp was already well occupied with a group of muzzle loaded deer hunters and a men's church group from Odessa, TX. The "Church Group" of guys was in their early 20's and 30's, but they weren't affiliated with the High Guads group or any NSS Grotto. One person in their group had a friend in the forest service who arranged to get them permits and in some cases coordinates to the caves. Jennifer Foote the High Guads coordinator was the next caver to arrive. She camped a little further down the road (at the next wide spot) known as New Mexico Camp. The next caver to arrive was Janet from Almagordo (I don't remember her last name). By Saturday morning before nine we had 10 cavers. We were informed that two had canceled so with 10 people present everyone going caving that day had arrived for the Safety Meeting and caving assignments.

One group of four people would be going to Hell Below Cave. Wayne was in that group as was Janet, Phyllis Boneau and another Wayne (I don't know his last name either). You have to talk to Wayne to get his trip report.

Jennifer Foote (from Santa Fe), William and Tammy Tucker, Dan and Amy Rhoads (from Lubbock, TX) and I made up the group going to Virgin Cave. I knew that Virgin Cave would be a long, strenuous trip as Wayne had been there on one of his previous High Guads trips. Well it turned out to be a REALLY long day. We left at 10:30am. and returned a few minutes after midnight. It is an hour from Texas Camp on the Guadalupe Ridge to the parking area from which you depart to hike to Virgin Cave. The cave is located in a large steep canyon. You are hiking down and around the canyon cliff face taking some big steps as you go. You can see the cave entrance quite a while before you reach it. There is an area of some exposure on the way in. You have, in my case at any rate, your large pack, caving pack, vertical gear, personal food and water, restoration tools, and a 2 liter water bottle to be used for cleaning formations in the cave.

Upon arriving at the cave and unlocking the gate we all ate lunch. Next Jennifer rigged the rope for the 80 foot drop. We were going to be working on the lower level of the cave. We left our large packs locked inside the cave entrance and left our vertical gear at the bottom of the drop. Half of the group had been to Virgin before and for the other half it was our first trip to this cave. It took a very long time to get to the area where we were going to be working as

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we three first timers had to stop for multiple “Kodak Moments.” It’s a well decorated cave. As we followed the flagging tape it was fairly strenuous (at least for me) in terms of going up and down, chimneying, crossing ledges or exposed areas and using a knotted pre-rigged hand line to move through the cave.

This was a comfortable group of people to cave with. They were friendly, conscientious, and always helping each other through difficult spots by explaining how to traverse an area, passing packs, pausing for picture taking, showing you where and how to step and what not to touch or get too close to. There was good advice, watchful eyes, patience, humor, and helping hands or (in my case) a knee up when you needed it.

We cleaned foot prints from flowstone and mud from formations near a small lake area for approximately 2 ½ hours. I learned good techniques and tool use from the group. We had spent a long time getting from the entrance to our working area, but when it was time to leave some time after 6pm, we hustled to get out. It still took time to get out because everyone had to gear up and ascend the 80 ft drop and then the rope had to be de-rigged. That all went a lot quicker than I imagined it would.

When we came out and locked up the gate the long hike back around and up the cliff face began. Any areas of exposure that had been visually intimidating on getting to the cave were no problem on the way out because you couldn’t see them in the dark. Our only exciting moment came in a spot where you needed to pass your pack up and then chimney a short distance up between the rocks. It was easy on the way down. Just grab the little bush and shimmy down; however, when we went to reverse this process it was found that the bush now had a black rattlesnake as a night time occupant. It was late, dark, and cool so the snake was content and on the sluggish side. It really was very easy to chimney up the rocks, just don’t touch the bush. OK some people were nervous about the snake, but it never acknowledged our presence when we passed.

I had realized from the outset of this day that being the oldest member of the group (the next oldest was ten years younger) that I would probably be their biggest liability or weakest link, the slowest and last one out on the return trip to the cars. There were others in the group with issues having to do with fear of exposure and heights, but with group support they conquered their fears and did very well. My only personal moment of doubt in my ability to do well on this trip was in getting up the last one third of the cliff face. I was running out of steam in the granny gear up mode. I stopped, drank some water, rested a few minutes and made it out with the group. I was elated to have made the trip without any missteps or mishaps, but I was exhausted.

It was just a few minutes after midnight when we rolled into Texas Camp where we were met by Wayne who was on his way to wake up Phyllis to help come and look for us, Midnight was the time limit he had set for us to be back. We just made it.

I was cold and tired, but Wayne fixed me hot soup and hot chocolate. I got into my sleeping bag, but was so wound up from the trip that I talked for two more hours before falling asleep.

Sunday morning six people had to leave early so only four of us went to Hidden Cave. Jennifer, Phyllis, Wayne and I left at 10 am. and returned at 2:30 pm. We hiked to the cave where Phyllis and Jennifer rigged the 60 foot drop.

I toured the lower level of the cave and took pictures. We then worked on cleaning flow stone until just after 1 pm. I toured the upper level of the cave before ascending the rest of the way out. Hidden cave also has many interesting and different formations, but a nearly flat easy walking floor throughout most of the cave. Still being tired from the day before that was a good thing as far as I was concerned. When I exited the cave and packed up my gear I started back to camp ahead of the others knowing I would be slow and have a hard time keeping up if I waited.

Caving in the High Guads was a physically tiring, very exciting and extremely gratifying experience for me. Virgin cave was the longest and most strenuous caving trip of my career. I was glad to have been privileged to go there because it is a "Project" cave only so not all that many people can get a permit to get in.

The next week was spent in seeing as much of Carlsbad Caverns and the surrounding areas as time would allow. Wayne and I took five of the six cave tours offered at the park. We went on The Lower Cave Tour, The Left Hand Tunnel Tour, and The King's Palace Tour, saw the main cave, of course, and also went to Slaughter Canyon Cave and Spider Cave. If you choose to walk into Carlsbad Caverns from the natural entrance you must exit via the elevators unless you get a permit from the forest supervisor allowing you to leave by going back up the trail to the natural entrance. We got that permit and had a good time hiking back up and out the natural entrance.

Carlsbad caverns with its "Wild Tours" (if you can call them that) is a cool 54 degrees; however, Slaughter Canyon and Spider Cave are very warm and humid. There are actually taller formations in Slaughter Canyon Cave than in Carlsbad Caverns. Regardless of how you feel about the condition of Carlsbad Caverns (which is just a medium sized cave) versus other commercial caves or even the Guadalupe caves, I found that place to be attention grabbing, inspiring and even mind boggling. There are so many formations and colors and shapes. You may smirk, but up until now I'm a Siskiyou County Lava Tube caver who hasn't had medium (let alone large) size caving experience. I've had limited exposure to the Marble Mountain caves and the limestone caves of the Lake Shasta area. That could be by choice, due to time, interest, or poison oak restraints. So I thoroughly enjoyed my New Mexico caving trip.

On our non-caving days we took several side trips around southwestern New Mexico. We visited the Brantley Lakes State Park and Sitting Bull Falls. We made a loop one day that took us through Cloudcroft and Fort Stanton where the Snowy River and Stanton caves are located. Then we went on to Almagordo, White Sands Monument, White Sands Missile Base, drove through Las Cruces and El Paso and past El Capitan in the Guadalupe Mountains on the way back to the town of Carlsbad. On the way back home we also saw Shiprock, Four Corners (stood there). Monument Valley (self guided tour of the Tribal Park) Glen Canyon Dam in Page, hiked in Zion Nat'l Park, and drove through Rachel, Nevada which is not far from Leviathan Cave. We took two weeks to travel 4700 miles. So many caves and so little time ...

MJ

GAPING HOLE ILLUMINATED
Focus on the Flushing Bush Sink
By Bighorn Broeckel

June 10, 2008, we had an easy day, walking along the Gaping Holes and collecting GPS entrance data. This is quite the pleasant pastime, and a wonderful excuse to revisit some great places like Gaping Holes. Well, at the south end of the Flushing Bush Sink, that entrance looked so big and inviting that I couldn't help myself. I had to go in for a quick look.

A train-tunnel passage takes off, rounds a bend, and abruptly ends at a large lava seal, where moth wings indicate a Townsends feeding station. There were some high ledges on the walls. There were openings to a crawlspace under the floor. That settled it! This cave surely deserved its own map.

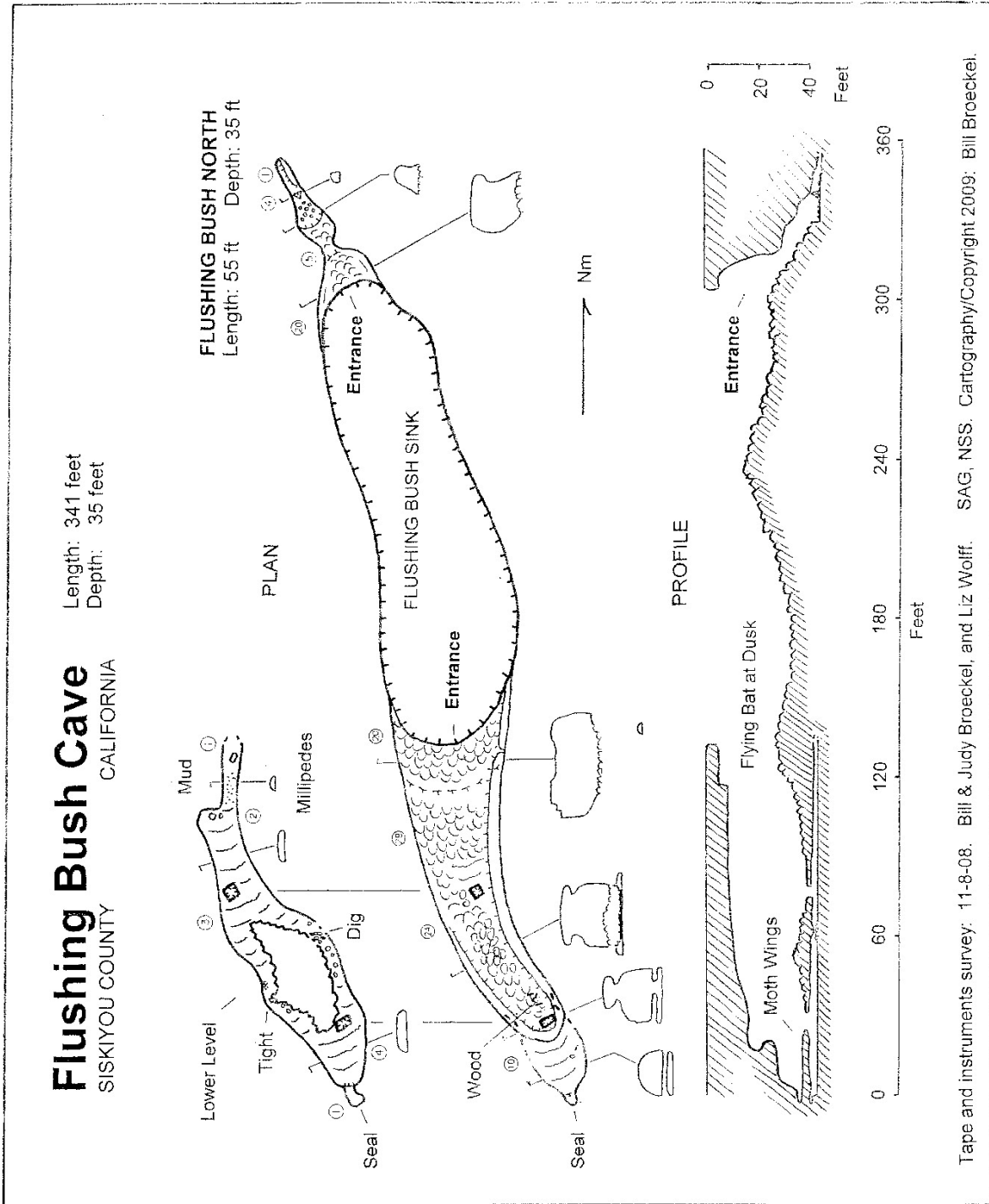
Yes, the Flushing Bush Sink is named and clearly shown on Bruce Roger's definitive, long fold-out map of the Gaping Holes, published in the Jan-Feb 1990 SAG RAG. This was the culmination of extensive cave exploration and survey, much in the 1970s, that revealed one of the most impressive lava tube areas in the state, still to this day fondly referred to as the Gaping Holes. In 1990, Rogers concisely describes the F-B Sink as follows: "Opening from the surface, and inaccessible from within the cave itself (Catwalk Cave), is Flushing Bush Sink. Its 180 foot length is underlain by another low passage 260 feet long. Apparently the tube was stacked four levels deep, with the upper level collapsing into a sink." (SAG RAG 9:1, Jan-Feb 1990.)

Nov. 8, 2008 was one of those winter-is-coming days out on the highlands, so we picked a reasonable objective – a detailed survey of the caves of Flushing Bush Sink. Liz Wolff and the Broeckels were the culprits. We started in the small cave at the north end of the sink, and found it was 55 ft long, ending in a lava plug about 40 feet below the flow surface. Next we traversed the length of the sink to the bigger cave at the south end. We pushed to the ends of the lower level crawlspace and surveyed 341 ft of passage, total for the cave.

There were some findings. The two caves have the same depth. Both levels of the larger cave have the same north-south extent. Both openings to the lower level are handy, because it is not easy to get from one end of the crawlway to the other. A central collapse zone leaves narrow passages around the sides, probably preserved under those high ledges along the big passage up above. One side was too tight, and the other was a dig.

At the north end of the crawlway, we found some burrows in mud, and cave adapted millipedes. This felt like the furthest point deep in the cave, a place to lay in the mud and contemplate the collapse rubble on top of the passage, over 20 ft thick. Rogers already mentioned the most amazing thing

cont



Tape and instruments survey: 11-8-08. Bill & Judy Broeckel, and Liz Wolff. SAG, NSS. Cartography/Copyright 2009: Bill Broeckel.

Map: Flushing Bush Cave

here. Down below the two levels of F-B Sink, two more levels of Catwalk Cave pass underneath, without connecting to Flushing Bush! Rogers later commented on our day by e-mail: "Interesting. When we first visited Flushing Bush Sink (after someone now mercifully forgotten took a hike to find a flushing bush), we roughly mapped it out to be located to the NE(?) of the main tube (as I vaguely remember – my large scale Gaping Holes map is still in storage) and after dropping it, decided to look elsewhere up trench for that 200-km-long tube." (Personal communication 11-11-08.)

Well, that is the spotlight on the Flushing Bush Sink, just one of the amazing collapse features that make up the caves of the Gaping Holes. Sorry about the delay, over a year since our little survey trip. It gets worse though, for my backlog of unfinished cave maps goes back way further than that.

BB



Liz Wolff and Judy Broeckel atop the cave at the south end of the Flushing Bush Sink, Gaping Holes, California 11-8-08.

ABOUT BATS**WHAT GOOD ARE BATS?**

By Ray Miller

To some, if an animal does not serve man it is not worthy of consideration, and they place bats in this category along with mice and rats. Bad thinking.

Bats do pay their way in this world. The fruit and nectar eating bats pollinate blossoms and spread seeds. Can't birds do this? Not always. Birds avoid open areas in fear of predators, but under the cover of darkness bats fly through exposed areas spreading seeds where they are badly needed. Due to environmental reasons, mainly heat, many flowers remain closed during the day. The bats take over the roll of pollinator.

The insectivores, the kind of bats we have in this area, are the major nighttime insect predator. Each night the bats sally fourth and eat their weight in bugs. That translates to about 5,000 mosquitoes. They also eat other flying aquatic insects and harmful moths and beetles. One local bat species, the Pallid Bat, also dines on terrestrial insects. It finds Jerusalem Crick-

ets (Potato Bugs), scorpions and centipedes absolutely yummy. To learn what bats eat we examine their guano (poop) under a microscope. The hard parts of insects are not digestible, and the insects the bats have eaten can be identified from their body parts.

Bats are a very good indicator species. In the local area biologists have captured as many as 450 bats in 1 day. The animals are examined closely to determine their general health and reproductive status. This helps us understand how well other organisms are fairing. Why use bats for this? Rabbits would work just as well, but it would take a long time to capture 450 rabbits. And think of the size pen you would need.

In the good old days the primary collecting tool was a shotgun. Today we capture specimens and release them unharmed at the point of capture in plenty of time for them to feed and return to their roosts before daylight.

RM**SAG RAG**

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