Cherney Maribel Caves County Park

Main pillar located in the Halloween Room of Maribel New Hope Cave. This is the largest room in Cherney Maribel Caves County Park being approximately 12' high and 30' wide.

Historical picture in front of Tartarus Cave.

Mountain bike trail in Cherney Maribel Caves County Park offers a variety of trail features.

Flowstone floor with stalactites on the ceiling. Picture taken in the west passage of the Formation Room of Maribel New Hope Cave.

Take this map with you! Scan the QR code to the right with your smartphone to view a PDF of this map!

About

Cherney Maribel Caves County Park occupies 75 acres on the West Twin River northeast of the Village of Maribel in the Town of Cooperstown. A rugged cliff line, generally paralleling the river, separates the gently rolling, partially wooded upland area from the wooded lowland adjacent to the river. The foot of the cliff line contains small caves and openings in the rock layers.

The upland wooded area and its fringes have been developed with facilities for picnicking and hiking. Additional trails are located in the area of the park above the cliff line. Portions of the open land have been planted with seedlings in a reforestation project. A staircase and trail system have been constructed for greater accessibility to the scenic lowland area.

The Cherney Maribel Caves County Park is an especially significant geological area that was formed primarily by glacial activity. Through millions of years of deposition and change, glaciers wore down the land surface exposing an underlying solid mass of rock called Niagara Dolomite. Thus was formed the naked crags and irregular cliff line of the area. These formations are in contrast to other parts of Wisconsin where rich layers of boulder till were deposited by the glaciers.

Over the years, the rock has decomposed. Springs, the changing seasons, ice, and temperature variations broke down the rock. Small caves and openings created by these forces appear in the rock layers of the cliff line. Springs which seep from the limestone rock flow over moss covered rocks and trickle to the river. Rare ferns, varieties of creeping plants, and wild flowers are found among the rocks and within the wooded growth. This natural beauty of the park made it a popular picnic and recreational area long before it was acquired by the county in 1963.

Although the hotel and bottling plant stone buildings do not belong to the county park, the historic site can be viewed and photographed from the park property line.

PARK SEASON AND HOURS:
APRIL 1ST - OCTOBER 31ST
DAWN TO DUSK

*Park not maintained beyond season dates.

Rules to Know

Removal of any natural items, rocks, trees, and plants is prohibited.

No hunting or trapping.

No fires except in grills at designated picnic areas.

Camping by permit only.

Dogs on a leash are permitted. Collect and remove all animal waste.

No motorized vehicles or horses.

No violent, loud, vulgar, indecent, or otherwise disorderly conduct.

No littering or dumping of off-site waste.

Please "Leave No Trace".

Pavilion Reservation

Please contact the Manitowoc County Park Office at 920-683-4185 for information regarding pavilion reservations.

Emergency Info

Please report suspicious activity to the Manitowoc County Park Office at 920-683-4185 during normal business hours or other times to the Manitowoc County Sheriff's Department at 920-683-4200.

FOR ALL EMERGENCIES DIAL 911

Bats of Maribel Caves

There are four different species of cave dwelling bats present at Cherney Maribel Caves County Park. These include the northern long-eared bat, the eastern pipistrelle, the big brown bat, and the little brown bat. Each of these bats have unique characteristics, diets, and preferred habitats. The bats at Maribel Caves feed on a variety of insects, including moths, flies, beetles, wasps, gnats, crane flies, ants, and mosquitoes.

One of the greatest risks to the bat population is white-nose syndrome. White-nose syndrome appears as a white, powdery substance on the bat's face and body and is caused by a fungus called *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* that grows in cool, wet conditions of hibernacula. Both white-nose syndrome and hibernaculum disturbance from humans can wake bats from torpor, increasing energy costs and using more fat reserves required for hibernation. If they run out of energy reserves before spring arrives, they're forced to either starve or die from exposure if they go outside in search of food.

Northern Long-Eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)

General Description:
Weight: 5 - 9 grams (0.2 - 0.3 oz)
Length: 7.7 - 9.2 cm (3.0 - 3.6 in)
Wingspan: 23 - 26 cm (9.1 - 10.2 in)
Fur color: Light to dark brown

The northern long-eared bat weighs the same as 2-3 pennies.

Habitat:

Habitat varies based on the time of year, sex, and reproductive status. In summer, northern long-eared bats often roost in trees but will also use man-made structures. They prefer to roost in tall trees with a dynamic forest structure that are typically in close proximity to wetlands. In winter, northern long-eared bats hibernate in caves and abandoned mines and can typically be found in deep crevices. Edge habitat is important for the northern long-eared bat, using it to avoid predation and feed. Their home range is approximately 150 - 250 acres, but this varies based on reproductive status.

Eastern Pipistrelle (*Perimyotis subflavus*)

Also known as: Tri-colored bat and formerly *Pipistrellus subflavus*

General Description:
Weight: 4 - 8 grams (0.1 - 0.3 oz)
Length: 7 - 8 cm (2.8 - 3.1 in)
Wingspan: 21 - 26 cm (8.3 - 10.2 in)
Fur color: Golden brown to reddish brown. The dorsal guard hairs have a tricolored appearance - dark at the base, yellowish in the middle, and dark at the tip.

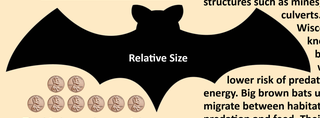
The eastern pipistrelle weighs the same as 2-3 pennies.

Habitat:

Habitat varies based on the time of year, sex, and reproductive status. In summer, males and non-reproductive females roost in deciduous trees, disguising themselves as leaves to avoid predation. Reproductive females prefer to roost in clusters of oak and maple leaves, but sometimes use man-made structures such as barns. Eastern pipistrelles use caves, mines, and rock crevices as summer night roosts. Edge habitat is important for the eastern pipistrelle, using it to avoid predation as they migrate and forage. In winter, eastern pipistrelles prefer caves and mines where temperatures are relatively constant. They commonly hibernate alone rather than in clusters like other species of bats. More research is needed to determine their home range.

Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)

General Description:
Weight: 15 - 26 grams (0.5 - 0.9 oz)
Length: 11.0 - 13.0 cm (4.3 - 5.1 in)
Wingspan: 32.5 - 35 cm (12.8 - 13.8 in)
Fur color: reddish brown dorsal fur, lighter brown ventral fur.



The big brown bats weighs the same as 6-10 pennies.

Habitat:

Habitat varies based on the time of year, sex, and reproductive status. In summer, males and non-reproductive females roost alone or with a few other males in buildings, trees, and rock crevices. Reproductive females typically form maternity colonies of 20 - 100 bats in buildings and bat houses. In winter, big brown bats hibernate in caves and man-made structures such as mines, basements, and culverts. They are the only Wisconsin bat species known to roost in buildings during winter, which may help lower risk of predation and conserve more energy. Big brown bats use edge habitat to migrate between habitat types, using it to avoid predation and feed. Their average home range is approximately 0.9 - 1.8 km (0.5 - 1.1 mi).

Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*)

General Description:
Weight: 5.5 - 12.5 grams (0.2 - 0.4 oz)
Length: 8.0 - 9.5 cm (3.1 - 3.7 in)
Wingspan: 22.2 - 26.9 cm (8.7 - 10.6 in)
Fur color: pale tan to reddish to dark brown, and is lighter on the ventral side.

The little brown bats weighs the same as 3-5 pennies.

Habitat:

Habitat varies based on the time of year, sex, and reproductive status. In summer, reproductive females usually form colonies of 300 - 1,200 bats in buildings, bat houses, and tree hollows, selecting sites based on ambient temperature and shelter. Males often roost alone in tree crevices, buildings, and occasionally caves and mines. Both sexes prefer roosting in mature forests as they provide more tree cavities and crevices and the reduced understory makes prey easier to locate and capture. Both sexes also prefer roosts near water where they forage. In winter, little brown bats often form clusters in humid caves and mines with constant temperature. The home range of females is 32 - 64 acres.