

Media Release:

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## Trapping and identifying bats with Junior Rangers

Complete darkness, high temperatures and stifling humidity weren't enough to scare a group of Junior Rangers from discovering the Bat Caves south of Alice Springs.

Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Senior Scientist Chris Pavey and Senior Ranger Michael Barritt, accompanied by 45 Alice Springs Junior Rangers and their parents, spent the night exploring the caves to discover more about the fascinating lives of our bat fauna.

"Bats favour humid and warm environments with a constant temperature for roosting, which helps to limit the amount of energy they use and is especially useful at the moment when females have dependent young," Mr Barritt said.

"During the course of the week 114 individual bats were caught, which is an amazing number.

"We found four different species including the Inland Cave Bat, Lesser Long-eared Bat, Gould's Wattled Bat and the Chocolate Wattled Bat but by far the most common bat captured was the Inland Cave Bat, a tiny bat weighing less than 10g.

"We used harp traps, which are a large rectangular frame with a series of fishing wires tied from top to bottom that allows the bats to fly into the wires and slide down to the bottom where they drop into a canvas bag.

"After exploring the cave system we went to check the bat traps and the kids were amazed to see the bats up close and learn about their unique characteristics before releasing them back into the wild."

The Parks and Wildlife Junior Ranger program has been operating for 15 years in Central Australia and also operates in Tennant Creek, Darwin and Katherine.

The program offers an assortment of amazing activities including mammal trapping, bush poetry, guided walks through the Desert Park, plant collecting and bird watching.

The program is entirely free to all kids between the ages of 8-14 in Alice Springs and most activities occur over weekends at a variety of times to allow kids to attend as many activities as possible.

Registrations are now open for the 2008 Junior Ranger program. Please call Parks and Wildlife after January 10<sup>th</sup> on 89518 247 for a 2008 registration package.

Ends

**Media Note – for more information contact Michael Barritt on 0401 112 525.  
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