



# Discover...

## Desert Wildflowers!

With the return of warm temperatures in spring, the desert quickens into another season of growth. Turkey vultures grace the skies and annuals begin to burst through the soil. People often ask when the best time is to see wildflowers. There is no straightforward answer. Spring is normally the driest time of year in the Guadalupe Mountains, yet many showy flowers can be on display. The brightest of the bunch have to be the cacti, and of them, claret cups are often among visitors' favorites because of the profusion of brilliant red flowers they will display March to April. Other easily recognizable cacti, such as the prickly pear and cholla, will flower later in the season (May-June). Catching some cacti in flower, such as horse crippers, can be one chance in a million, because they flower for only one day during the entire season. Soap tree yuccas and Torrey yuccas will exhibit stalks of snow white blossoms in April or May. Many visitors driving up to Carlsbad Caverns' visitor center are thrilled to see the canyon walls decorated with patches of purple from mesquite, the fiery red tips of ocotillo, or the neon pink of strawberry cactus.

Enjoying the diversity and beauty of flowering plants in the Guadalupe Mountains requires an eye for subtlety and close observation. Rather than hillsides covered with color, dozens of relatively inconspicuous plants can be flowering within a few feet of you on any given hike. Brief and rare spring precipitation can only increase the beauty. Last year, the Guadalupe Mountains received over twice the average annual amount of rainfall, beginning with flooding last spring.

Summer visitors are often surprised at the frequency of summer monsoon rains and to find the desert in full bloom. Shrubs such as the goldeneyes become butterfly magnets and the color then takes to the skies. The ornate flowers of columbines can be found in shaded canyons and near water sources. Mounds of gold bedeck the countryside in late summer, as snakeweed takes advantage of the increased rainfall. Take a closer look at the beauty that surrounds you and discover desert wildflowers. Ask a ranger about the wildflowers that have caught your eye.



*Discovering flowers and the butterflies that are attracted to them, are some of the rewards of hiking in a land of plentiful sunshine and surprising diversity.*

## The Natural Resource Challenge

by Bill Reid

You may not have noticed, but for the last three years researchers have been scouring the peaks and canyons of Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. This is an exciting time of change in the National Park Service (NPS). Those researchers are making scientific quality lists of plants and animals to refine those that many parks have been compiling. There's change afoot in the NPS.

Things were simpler in 1916 when the NPS was created. Preserving and protecting each park's resources for the future was largely a matter of patrols by dedicated rangers. But

things are different now, both in and around the parks and in our understanding of nature's complexity.

Human activity—economic development, grazing, and introductions of non-native species—has increased the stresses on the parks. And fences don't stop non-native weeds, Africanized bees, or air pollution blowing in from El Paso. Also, the parks are now biological islands in a sea of developed or altered lands. It is believed that species now occurring only inside the parks will slowly disappear. Increasingly, these stresses alter the parks' ecosystems.

For our desert parks there are real questions of their recovery from earlier impacts. It is probable that Carlsbad Caverns' bats are now only a small fraction of their original numbers. Only about 30 years ago, the NPS removed 7,000 goats from the new Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

Will a more natural condition be able to redevelop? Will it happen naturally? Are solid restoration efforts needed?

Meanwhile, park land managers are increasingly busy with their many tasks, which include complying with over 80 major environmental laws. Recognizing all this in 1999, the NPS published *The Natural Resource Challenge*, an action plan by its National Leadership Council to bring park land management to a higher scientific level.

This initiative led to a plan to first complete the inventories of park plants and animals. This is to be followed by developing an understanding of park ecosystems, the vital signs that indicate a park's health, and a long term monitoring plan. Also, research learning centers—first grade to high school science—will be developed.

Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains have joined with five other parks to form the Chihuahuan Desert Network and move the plan forward. This year the park inventories will be completed and the first steps toward monitoring will be made. University and professional partners from New Mexico State University, University of Texas, Texas A&M, and the University of Arizona are aiding in the effort. Together, they are working hard to protect the natural heritage of the United States for the whole world to enjoy.



*Part of the Natural Resource Challenge includes making an inventory of animals within the parks.*



Illustration by Zachary Zindler



NPS photo

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## Telephone and Web Directory

**Carlsbad Caverns National Park**  
3225 National Parks Hwy  
Carlsbad, NM 88220  
(505) 785-2232  
www.nps.gov/cave

**Guadalupe Mountains National Park**  
HC60, Box 400  
Salt Flat, Texas 79847  
(915) 828-3251  
www.nps.gov/gumo

**Carlsbad Caverns Guadalupe Mountains Association**  
Operates both parks' bookstores. Books may also be purchased by mail or online.  
PO Box 1417  
Carlsbad, NM 88221  
(505) 785-2486  
(505) 785-2318 FAX  
www.ccgma.org

**Food, Lodging, and Camping**  
**Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce:**  
(505) 887-6516  
www.carlsbadchamber.com

**Van Horn, Texas Visitors Bureau:**  
(915) 283-2682  
www.vanhornadvocate.com/  
communityad1.shtml

**Weather Conditions**  
Carlsbad Weather Watch:  
(505) 885-1848

**Road Conditions**  
New Mexico: (800) 432-4269  
Texas: (800) 452-9292.

**Emergency:  
call 911.**

## Greetings!

Welcome to Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. Carlsbad Caverns National Park, a World Heritage Site since 1995, features a spectacular cave system of highly decorated chambers. Guadalupe Mountains National Park protects one of the world's best examples of a fossilized reef. Both parks are located within the Chihuahuan Desert, a fascinating place to explore desert life.

Within the boundaries of these parks, you will find areas preserved as wilderness. A wilderness designation is the highest level of land protection our society can grant. Here, travel is by foot or horseback only and natural processes are allowed to operate freely. September 3, 2004, marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act. What better way to honor the Wilderness Act than to enjoy the gift of wild lands inherited from one generation and passed on to the next? Ask a ranger where you can hike into the wilderness and how best to prepare.

The Park staff are here to help make your visit a truly memorable event. They will be happy to help you plan your visit and provide information. Guided tours at Carlsbad Caverns can enrich your park experience.

John Benjamin  
Superintendent  
Carlsbad Caverns National Park

## Thank You, Volunteers!

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the dedicated effort and talent that volunteers have brought to Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. Volunteers play a vital role in fulfilling our mission of preserving our natural and cultural heritage and sharing that heritage with the visiting public. Volunteers do everything from staffing the information desk, roving interpretation, patrolling surface and cave trails, to trail maintenance, research, cave restoration, and more. To become a volunteer contact...

Carlsbad Caverns  
Jason Richards  
(505) 785-3135

Guadalupe Mountains  
Doug Buehler  
(915) 828-3251 x105

These tours offer a variety of caving experiences, from easy lantern tours to challenging trips involving crawling and squeezing through tight passages. Bat flight is a free program offered every evening Memorial Day through mid-October. Don't miss it!

Guadalupe Mountains National Park has over 80 miles of hiking trails to explore, ranging from wheelchair accessible paths to strenuous mountain hikes, including an 8.4 mile roundtrip hike to Texas' highest mountain Guadalupe Peak (8,749').

As you travel and spend time in the area, please remember to keep safety in mind. Deer and other wildlife are plentiful—enjoy watching wildlife, but remember they often move across roads, especially in the evenings; be vigilant while driving during twilight hours. Hikers should be prepared for rapidly changing weather conditions. Hikers can become dehydrated in our dry climate; carry plenty of water. Always check with a ranger before venturing into the backcountry.

We are wholeheartedly committed to our mission of preserving and providing for the enjoyment of our nation's most outstanding treasures. We wish you a rewarding experience in every way.

John V. Lujan  
Superintendent  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park

## Travelling with A Pet?

On a warm day the temperature inside a car can kill a pet. Do not leave an animal unattended; the kennel is the only safe place for your pet.

At **Carlsbad Caverns**, pets are not permitted in the cave or at bat flight programs; during the day your pet may be cared for at the kennel for a small fee.

At **Guadalupe Mountains**, pets are not allowed on trails, in the backcountry, in buildings, or at evening programs; they are permitted in the campground. In any national park, your pet must be physically restrained at all times.



## Hey Kids! Become a Junior Ranger!

Many national parks across America offer a Junior Ranger program for children to encourage interest in their national parks and to promote a sense of stewardship and ownership for these special places that they come to visit. This self-paced educational program allows the participant to earn a patch and/or certificate upon completion of required activities that teach the children about the park resources. Age appropriate activities are included in the Junior Ranger booklet, typically for pre-kindergarten through upper elementary-aged children.

At Carlsbad Caverns, the Junior Ranger program offers activities to teach about the resources both above ground and below the surface (including plant

and animal life of the desert, cave features, and history of the park). Younger children have opportunities to color and draw, find specified objects on a visual scavenger hunt, use their senses to experience their surroundings, and complete games. Older children have opportunities to sequence events, complete word searches, and write stories and poems. Each activity in the booklet is an optional activity depending on interest and age-level. Once the booklet is checked by a park ranger, the participant is presented a Carlsbad Caverns National Park Junior Ranger patch.

The Junior Ranger booklet is available through the Carlsbad Caverns Guadalupe Mountains Association bookstore, located in the visitor center at

the park. There is a charge of \$1.00 to participate in the program, which includes the booklet and patch (given upon completion of the activities). Kids of any age may participate.

At Guadalupe Mountains, participants work through a separate activity booklet and visit points of interest within the park. The booklet accommodates families of varying travel plans. Many of the activities can be completed in the Pine Springs Visitor Center and Museum. Children who complete three activities earn a badge and certificate, while those who do six activities earn a patch in addition to the badge and certificate. There is no charge for participation in the program, but donations are always welcome.

# Explore Carlsbad Caverns' Backcountry!

by Mike Fitz

Carlsbad Caverns National Park is famous for its namesake cave, and its popularity shows. Nearly half a million visitors are drawn to the Caverns each year. One easily understands the Cavern's popularity after passing through its chambers, but that same popularity may not offer a person enough solitude on busy days.

Working as a park ranger at the Caverns is not a lonely job. On our busiest days, working in the visitor center or cave can seem rushed, busy, and stressful. Perhaps you may feel similarly when experiencing full parking lots and crowded cave trails. Yet, there is room to escape. Unknown to most, but no secret to me, is a rugged land virtually empty of people, but a land full of space to roam, find solitude, and discover. It is a land open to the curious wanderings of crowded souls, and it is as easy to find as it is to park the car and walk into the Carlsbad Caverns Wilderness.

Trails in the backcountry are few and well trodden trails are even fewer, but the backcountry holds no shortage of destinations. I often choose routes of travel up, down, and around canyons, across flat plateaus, and into places ripe for discovery. My favorite hikes are those with no goal or destination in mind other than to just see, observe, and experience. For those hikers who look closely, few things can be more rewarding than gazing upon an empty, rarely seen and rarely visited panorama, or sneaking a glimpse of elusive wildlife or signs of their presence—elk tracks in the high country of the park's western edge, a deer skull complete with antlers in a lonely canyon, mountain lion scat in a secluded draw, javelina quickly running away from my travels, a rattlesnake warming itself on a sunny ledge. I wonder, how do these creatures live? What special adaptations enable them to survive? What can they teach us about resourcefulness? Walking amongst lechuguilla, agaves, sotol, yuccas, cacti, shrubs, trees, and the infinite blooms of springtime wildflowers can create a curious pull to learn more about how they manage to survive and thrive. Feeling the effects of the never ending gauntlet of spines, thorns, saw-toothed edges, and leaves as sharp as bayonets provides some first-hand knowledge of the plants' ability to do so. Pictographs in a protected rock shelter, roasting pits, and chert flakes only allude to an ancient past human presence. Foundations of former homesteads speak



*View of Yucca Canyon. With adequate preparations, desert hiking offers the reward of uncommon beauty.*

of a closer past. Discovering the remnants of people long since gone from the park, even looking upon fossils on an exposed limestone ledge, can stir thoughts of time, change, adaptability, and survival.

Still, as I hike and ponder these things, I must take into consideration my adaptability and survival. I enter the wilderness well equipped with food, plenty of water, a map, compass, other essential items, and most importantly, a knowledge of how to use them. I carry with me the knowledge that the survival of the land as it is depends upon everyone who enters the wilderness treading lightly and with care. Plants, animals, rocks, minerals, artifacts, and rock art must not be disturbed. They should be left as they were found. Caves are not to be entered. My presence requires responsibility. Aldo Leopold once wrote that he would not want to be

young again without wild land to be young in. I must remember as I enjoy the empty, open spaces of Carlsbad Caverns National Park that I, and all who choose to enter the backcountry, carry a responsibility. That responsibility requires ensuring that future generations have the opportunity to escape from crowds, noise, hustle, and bustle of society to wild lands. Survival of the wilderness requires wise stewardship.

If you choose to explore the unbeaten path—whether for an hour, a day, a week, or just sit and look into the wilderness—take your curiosity, knowledge, emotions, and responsibilities for the land with you. Use them all to escape, wander, and discover in the wild, unknown and seldom seen backcountry of Carlsbad Caverns.

## Desert Hiking Tips...

### Plan Ahead

- Check with a ranger for current trail and weather conditions.
- Obtain a free permit if you plan on spending a night in the backcountry.
- In the summer, avoid hiking during midday heat.
- Know your travel route.
- Leave travel plans with someone you know (relative, friend, neighbor).



### Carry with You

- Water**  
(1+ gallon per person per day)
- Sunscreen**  
Sunglasses/light-colored long-sleeved shirt/long pants
- Map & Compass**  
(know how to use them)
- Sturdy Footwear**
- Food**
- First Aid Kit**  
(include tweezers for cactus spine removal)
- Bandana** (can be used as a sling, bandage, or soaked in water and wrapped around neck for cooling)
- Mirror/Whistle**  
(used for emergency signaling)
- Flashlight**
- Rain Gear**  
(a plastic trash bag will do in a pinch)

### Tread Lightly

- Choose the Right Path**  
Travel on durable surfaces; steer clear of flowers and other plants.
- Pack It In, Pack It Out**  
Put litter including biodegradable material such as orange peels, sunflower seed shells, etc. in trash cans or carry it home.
- Leave What You Find**  
Leave plants, rocks, and historical items as you find them so the next person can enjoy them.
- Respect Wildlife**  
Observe animals from a distance and never approach, feed, or follow them.
- Be Kind to Other Visitors**  
Respect the natural silence by not yelling or making other loud noises.

# Carlsbad Caverns

## Tour the Main Cave...

### Spring, Fall, & Winter Hours

Natural Entrance	8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Big Room	8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

### Summer Hours (May 28 - Sep. 5)

Natural Entrance	8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Big Room	8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

### Fees

#### Entrance Fees

		Audio Guide
Adults—age 16 and over	\$6.00	plus \$3.00
Children—age 6 to 15	\$3.00	plus \$3.00
Children—age 5 and under	free	plus \$3.00

The National Parks Pass, Golden Age Passport, Golden Eagle Passport, and Golden Access Passport all cover the basic entrance fee.

Entrance fee applies to self-guided tours. Guided tours require an additional fee.

*All fees and tours are subject to change at any time.*

### Reservations

We recommend that you make reservations for guided tours at least six weeks in advance. Some tours fill quickly. Reservations are not necessary for self-guided tours. To make reservations call the National Park Reservation System at:

Reservations	(800) 967-CAVE (2283)
TDD	(888) 530-9796
Cancellations	(800) 388-2733

### Have a Safe Tour

Cave temperature is 56° F (13° C) year-round. A light jacket or sweater and good walking shoes are recommended. Do not wear sandals. For your safety:

- Stay on the paved trail.
- Supervise children closely; children under age 16 must remain with an adult at all times.
- Ask park rangers for help.
- Take prescribed medications with you.
- High humidity in the cave can affect respiratory problems; bring your **inhaler** just in case.
- If you are **DIABETIC**, be sure you have eaten enough calories.
- Leave your baby stroller in the car; child-carrying backpacks are recommended.
- Leave your pet at the kennel, not in your car.

### Protect the Cave

- Never touch, tap, or handle the cave formations; the oils on your skin damage the formations.
- Never take gum, food, or drinks into the cave. Water only.
- Never use tobacco of any kind in the cave.
- Never throw coins or other objects into the pools.

### Photography

Photography is permitted on most tours; however, please use good etiquette. Warn those around you before you flash, keep tripods on the trail, and do not use the rocks as your personal tripod. Video cameras are permitted on the Big Room, Natural Entrance, and King's Palace tours. Please use caution and do not use the ultra-bright lights available on some cameras.



Cavern Supply Company



Cavern Supply Company



Cavern Supply Company

#### Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route

Length: 1.25 miles, 1 hour  
Fee: Entrance fee

This hike is similar to walking into a steep canyon (a descent of about 800 feet in one mile). It is recommended only for those physically fit and healthy; sturdy footwear required. Highlights include the Natural Entrance, Devil's Spring, Whale's Mouth, and Iceberg Rock.

#### Rent the Cavern Audio Guide!

This guide is available for \$3.00 and is essential for both self-guided tours. It offers commentary by park rangers, researchers, and others who are knowledgeable about the cave's science and history.

#### Big Room Self-Guided Route

Length: 1.25 miles, 1.5 hours  
Fee: Entrance fee

Descend by elevator to start the tour in the Underground Rest Area. The non-skid trail is paved and mostly level, although there are a couple of short, steep hills. All visitors to Carlsbad Cavern should experience this tour. Highlights include the Lion's Tail, Hall of Giants, Bottomless Pit, and Rock of Ages. This trail is partially accessible to visitors using wheelchairs, with assistance. The park does not provide wheelchairs. This trail can be accessed after hiking the 1.25 mile Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route.

#### King's Palace Guided Tour

Length: 1 mile, 1.5 hours  
Fee: Entrance fee and \$8.00 Tour Ticket

Tours depart from the Underground Rest Area. Tickets may be purchased at the visitor center; however, reservations are recommended; call ahead. You will visit four highly decorated chambers: King's Palace, Papoose Room, Queen's Chamber, and Green Lake Room. The tour guide will turn out the lights for a blackout experience. The trail is paved; however, there is a steep hill that you must walk down and then back up.

## Surface Activities

#### Services

Facilities include a visitor center, exhibits, bookstore, restaurant, gift shop, and kennel service. Ranger programs are offered daily. Other activities include:

#### Nature Trail

This one-mile paved, partially accessible trail begins near the visitor center and highlights desert plants.

#### Scenic Drive

A one-hour drive through the Chihuahuan Desert, this 9.5-mile gravel road is suitable for most vehicles except trailers and motor homes. Brochures are available for 50 cents. The Scenic Drive is open 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. mid-May to mid-October. It is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. mid-October to mid-May. These hours are subject to change.

#### Rattlesnake Springs

This historic oasis includes a picnic area, shade trees, restrooms, and excellent bird watching. Located 5.5 miles south of White's City on U.S. Highway 62/180, then 2.5 miles west on a signed county road. Day use only.

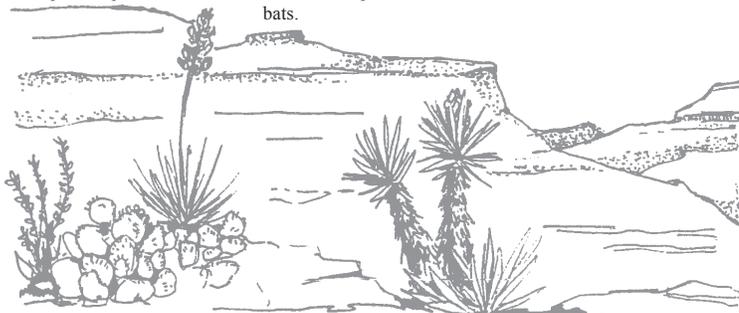
#### Hiking & Camping

The park's wilderness offers day hikes and backcountry camping (permit required). Rangers at the visitor center can provide free permits, trail and weather information, and backcountry camping tips. The bookstore sells topographic maps, which are considered essential for desert hiking.

#### Bat Flight Programs (Summer Only)

A few hundred thousand bats fly from Carlsbad Caverns each evening from mid-May until the bats migrate to Mexico sometime in mid-October. The ranger program generally begins each evening 30 to 60 minutes before sunset at the park amphitheater,

though weather and lightning can cause cancellation of the program. Check at the Visitor Center for the exact time the program starts. **No Flash Photography** is allowed as it may be a disturbance to the bats. This rule is strictly enforced for protection of the bats.



# Carlsbad Caverns

e... ..or try something different!



## Left Hand Tunnel

On this lantern-lit tour your guide will highlight cavern history, formations, cave pools, and Permian Age fossils. This is the easiest of the adventure tours on unpaved trails. Be aware that the dirt trail winds over small uneven or slippery slopes and careful footing is required to avoid cavern pools and fragile formations. Lanterns are provided. Tour departs from the visitor center lobby.

## Slaughter Canyon Cave

This moderately strenuous tour is through a well-decorated undeveloped backcountry cave. *Tours depart from the cave entrance at the scheduled time.* It is mandatory for each person to bring a two to four C or D-cell alkaline battery flashlight with fresh batteries. Penlights are not permitted. The route is slippery, muddy, and at times requires a supervised ascent of a 15-foot flowstone slope using a knotted rope.

*Do not drive to the visitor center for this cave tour. Allow plenty of time to drive to Slaughter Canyon and 45 minutes for the steep and strenuous 0.5-mile hike to the cave entrance. Attempt this hike only if you are in good health. Carry water—the desert is dry, and can be very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Stay on the trail and wear good walking shoes.*

## Lower Cave

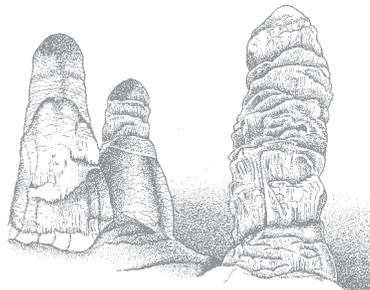
This moderately strenuous tour begins with a ranger supervised descent down a 10-foot flowstone slope using a knotted rope, followed by a 30-foot series of three ladders. Bring gloves and four AA alkaline batteries per person. The park provides helmets, headlamps and optional kneepads. Tour departs from the visitor center lobby. You will see evidence of early exploration, cave pools, and beautiful formations.

## Hall of the White Giant

This is a strenuous, challenging tour to a remote chamber in Carlsbad Cavern. You will be required to crawl long distances, squeeze through tight crevices, and climb up slippery passages. Bring gloves and four AA batteries per person. We provide helmets, headlamps, and kneepads. Tour departs from the visitor center lobby.

## Spider Cave

On this strenuous tour you can expect tight crawls, canyon-like passages, and bizarre formations. Bring gloves and four new AA batteries. The park provides helmets, headlamps, and kneepads. The tour departs from the Visitor Center for a short drive and then a short hike to the cave. Bring water for the hike.



**Cave Tour Reservations:**  
**1-800-967-2283**

Tour	Trail Surface	Offered	Departure Time	Adult Fee	Age Limit	Tour Length	Group Size
King's Palace	Paved trail; 80' hill must be climbed on return trip	Daily	Fall-Spring 10 & 2  Summer 10,11, 2 & 3	Adults \$8 Golden Age \$4 Golden Access \$4 Children (6-15) \$4 Children (4-5) Free	4	1.5 hours	75
Left Hand Tunnel	Packed dirt trail	Daily	9:00 am	\$7.00 and General Admission Ticket	6	2 hours	15
Slaughter Canyon Cave	Strenuous climb required to reach cave entrance. Trail in cave is slippery, uneven, and rocky	Saturday and Sunday (Tours offered daily in summer)	10:00 a.m.	\$15.00	6	2 hours	25
Lower Cave	Must negotiate fifty feet of ladders, variable dirt trails, might get dirty	Monday through Friday	1:00 pm	\$20.00 and General Admission Ticket	12	3 hours	12
<b>Wild Caving – kneepads required!</b>							
Hall of the White Giant	Climbing and crawling, tight squeezes, drop-offs, will get dirty	Saturday	1:00 pm	\$20.00 and General Admission Ticket	12	4 hours	8
Spider Cave	Climbing and crawling, tight squeezes, drop-offs, will get dirty	Sunday	1:00 pm	\$20.00	12	4 hours	8

# Guadalupe Mountains



Rachele Riley



Rachele Riley



John Cwiklik

## Plan Your Trip Wisely!

Facilities and services within and near Guadalupe Mountains National Park are extremely limited. The nearest gasoline stations are 32 miles west or 35 miles east. There is no campstore; bring everything you need with you.

## Information and exhibits

### Headquarters Visitor Center

Elevation 5,740'. On U.S. Highway 62/180, 55 miles southwest of Carlsbad and 110 miles east of El Paso. Open every day except Christmas. Open Memorial Day to Labor Day 8:00 A.M.- 6:00 P.M.; Labor Day to Memorial Day 8:00 A.M.- 4:30 P.M. Information, natural history museum, introductory slide program.

### Frijole Ranch History Museum

The ranch house features exhibits describing historic and current use of the Guadalupe. Grounds include a picnic area near a spring shaded by large oak trees. Restroom available. Staffed intermittently.

### McKittrick Canyon

Highway entrance gate is open 8:00 A.M.- 4:30 P.M., Mountain Standard Time; 8:00 A.M.- 6:00 P.M. Mountain Daylight Savings Time. Closing time changes when Daylight Savings Time begins and ends. Restrooms, outdoor exhibits, slide program.

## Dog Canyon

This secluded, forested canyon on the north side of the park is a great place to begin a backpacking trip for those coming through Carlsbad.

### Ranger Station and Campground

Located at the end of New Mexico Highway 137, 70 miles from Carlsbad and 110 miles from Park Headquarters, at an elevation of 6,290 feet. The campground has nine tent sites and four RV spaces.

## Camping

Water and restrooms are available; but there are no showers, RV hookups, or dump stations. The fee is \$8.00 per night, per site, \$4.00 with a Golden Age or Golden Access Passport. No wood or charcoal fires are permitted; camp stoves are allowed.

### Pine Springs Campground

Located near the Headquarters Visitor Center, there are twenty tent and nineteen RV campsites available on a first-come, first-served basis. Two group campsites are available for groups of 10-20 people. Reservations (for group sites only) can be made by phoning (915) 828-3251.

## Backpacking

Eighty-five miles of trails lead through forests, canyons, and the desert. A free permit is required if you plan to spend a night in the backcountry. Permits are issued at the Pine Springs Visitor Center and the Dog Canyon Ranger Station. Wood and charcoal fires are prohibited. Camp stoves are allowed. Pack out all your trash. Pets are not allowed on park trails. Firearms are not permitted within the park.

Preparation is the key to an enjoyable backpacking trip. Be prepared for changing weather conditions. Carry plenty of water—there are no water sources in the backcountry. Topographic maps, hikers' guides, and information can be found at the Pine Springs Visitor Center and the Dog Canyon Ranger Station.

### Day Hikes at Dog Canyon

#### Indian Meadow Nature Loop

**Easy.** 0.6 miles roundtrip. A guide booklet describes ecology and geology.

#### Marcus Overlook

**Moderate.** 4.6 miles roundtrip. Follow the Bush Mountain Trail to the ridge-top for a view into West Dog Canyon. Trail climbs 800 feet in elevation.

#### Lost Peak

**Strenuous.** 6.4 miles roundtrip. Climb out of Dog Canyon on the Tejas Trail to visit the conifer forest above. Outstanding views from Lost Peak. Trail climbs 1,500 feet in elevation.

## Day Hikes

Entrance Fees (\$3.00 per person 16 years and older) can be paid at trailheads. Good for one week.

Trail-Head	Trail	Roundtrip length	Description
Visitor Center	Pinery Trail	0.75 mile	<b>Easy.</b> Discover the desert as you walk to the ruins of the Pinery, a stagecoach station on the Butterfield Overland Mail Route in 1858. Trailside exhibits; <b>wheelchair accessible</b> .
Pine Springs Campground	Guadalupe Peak Trail	8.4 miles	<b>Strenuous.</b> Hike to the "Top of Texas" at 8,749 feet, for spectacular views. Trail climbs 3,000 feet in elevation. Avoid the peak during high winds and thunderstorms.
	Devil's Hall Trail	4.2 miles	<b>Moderate.</b> Rocky hike in Pine Spring Canyon to the Hikers' Staircase and Devil's Hall. After the first mile the trail drops into the wash. Turn left and follow the canyon bottom to Devil's Hall, where a sign marks the end of the trail.
	The Bowl	9.1 miles	<b>Strenuous.</b> The Bowl shelters a high country conifer forest. Recommended route: Tejas Trail to Pine Top, Bowl Trail to Hunter Peak, Bear Canyon Trail, Frijole Trail back to the campground. Trail climbs 2,500 feet in elevation.
	El Capitan Trail	11.3 miles	<b>Strenuous.</b> Desert lovers will appreciate the rocky arroyos and open vistas while skirting along the base of El Capitan. Recommended Route: El Capitan Trail, Salt Basin Overlook Trail, and return on the El Capitan Trail. Beyond the Salt Basin Overlook the El Capitan Trail continues to Williams Ranch, an additional 4.7 miles one-way.
Frijole Ranch	Smith Springs Loop Trail	2.3 miles	<b>Moderate.</b> Look for birds, deer, and elk as you pass Manzanita Spring on the way to the shady oasis of Smith Spring. Please do not drink the water or wade in the springs. The first 0.2 miles to Manzanita Springs is <b>wheelchair accessible</b> .
McKittrick Canyon	McKittrick Canyon Trail	4.8 miles	<b>Moderate.</b> Follow an intermittent stream through the desert and canyon woodlands to the historic Pratt Cabin. A guidebook is available at the trailhead. One mile beyond the Pratt Cabin is the Grotto Picnic Area and Hunter Line Cabin. Please do not drink the water or wade in the creek. To protect this fragile environment, you are required to stay on the trail.
	McKittrick Nature Loop	0.9 miles	<b>Moderate.</b> Climb the foothills and learn about the natural history of the Chihuahuan Desert. Trailside exhibits.
	Permian Reef Trail	8.4 miles	<b>Strenuous.</b> For serious geology buffs, this trail has stop markers that can be used with a geology guidebook sold at the Visitor Center. There are excellent views into McKittrick Canyon from the ridgetop. Trail climbs 2,000 feet in elevation.

## Hike safely...

- There is no water available along park trails, so be sure to bring plenty with you. One gallon per person per day is recommended.
- Trails are rocky—wear sturdy shoes.
- Carry a trail map.
- Pack warm clothing and rain gear; sudden weather changes are common.

## Protect the park

- Stay on trails; don't cut across switchbacks or create new trails.
- Carry out all trash, including cigarette butts.
- Report any trail hazards to the visitor center.
- Collecting of natural, historic, or prehistoric objects is not allowed.

Weather	Temperatures (F.) Average		Rainfall Average
	High	Low	Inches
Jan	53	30	1.04
Feb	58	35	1.04
March	63	38	0.87
April	71	46	0.57
May	78	55	1.26
June	88	63	1.48
July	87	63	3.08
Aug	84	62	3.77
Sept	78	57	5.22
Oct	71	49	1.41
Nov	61	38	0.65
Dec	57	33	0.67

Average annual precipitation is 21.06 inches.  
Pine Springs Weather Station, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, elevation 5,500'.

# Hop, Leap, and Bound

by Doug Buehler

What animals might fit the above description of movement in the Southwest? You might come up with a long list. One of the most visible animals is the black-tailed jackrabbit. It is commonly seen and easily taken for granted. Sometimes some of the more amazing things that occur in nature are ones that we see, but don't really think much about.

Think about the first time you saw a jackrabbit. If you were like me, the thing you remember most is the long ears. I was used to seeing cottontail rabbits with their much smaller ears and body size. In fact, if you really want to impress someone with your nature knowledge, the next time you see a jackrabbit call it a jackhare. Hares have young born with hair and their eyes open. Rabbits are born without hair and their eyes are closed. A jackrabbit's young are born with hair and eyes open, so they are actually hares... confusing isn't it. Common names sometimes get attached to an animal without serious scientific considerations and these common names become a permanent fixture. Can you think of other animals that fall into this category (horned toad—horned lizard, buffalo—bison, etc)? Getting back to the ears, as one might imagine the large ears are excellent for hearing. The ears can be rotated to cover a wide field of listening. However, one of the most useful functions of the ears relates to something found in your house that makes life more bearable—a thermostat. Just as you turn a thermostat up or down to control the temperature in your house, the jackrabbit's ears can

be moved up or down to help control its body temperature. With the ears up on a hot day, the animals can remove about 1/3 of their body heat by dilating the thin veins located on their ears. Imagine always carrying your own built-in air conditioner—great in the summers of the Southwest. When the animal lowers its ears across its back, it helps conserve heat during cold periods. Next time you use your thermostat, think about the jackrabbit and how useful ears are for more than hearing.

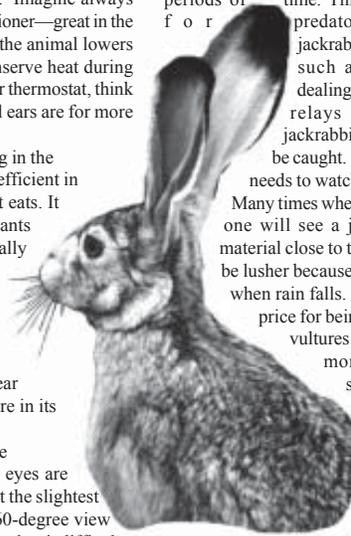
Water is a problem when living in the Southwest. The jackrabbit is very efficient in getting water from the vegetation it eats. It normally feeds at night when the plants have higher moisture content internally and the relative humidity is higher in the surrounding air. To take this to the extreme, during drier periods of the year when the grasses and forbs have their lowest moisture content, a jackrabbit eats prickly pear cactus, which stores a lot of moisture in its fleshy pads.

Bug eyes certainly apply to the appearance of a jackrabbit. These eyes are really special. The animal, with just the slightest movement of its head, can see a 360-degree view of its surroundings. This certainly makes it difficult for a predator to sneak up on one.

If attacked by predators such as coyotes or hawks the hop, leap, and bound comes into play. The jackrabbit will start out with a slow erratic gait, go to a few slow

hops, and then short sprinting leaps and finally long graceful bounds that can cover 20 feet at a time and speeds can be reached up to 30-35 MPH for short periods of time. This makes it extremely difficult for predators to ever catch up with a jackrabbit. However, some predators such as coyotes have a way of dealing with this speed. They hunt in relays and literally wear the jackrabbit's stamina down until it can be caught. One "predator" the jackrabbit needs to watch out for is a mechanical one. Many times when driving down a road at night one will see a jackrabbit feeding on plant material close to the road. These plants tend to be lush because of runoff from the pavement when rain falls. Some of the animals pay the price for being close to the road; however, vultures and other scavengers the next morning make sure this food source is not wasted.

So the next time you see a jackrabbit, or should I say jackhare, think about what an amazing creature it is with a built-in air conditioner, being able to see a 360-degree view with virtually no movement of its head, the ability to run 30-35 MPH, and a diet of cactus pads. It might cause you to stop and think with a different perspective when you see this common animal.



# Unexpected Creatures

by Doug Buehler

I heard a sudden rustling in the nearby vegetation and caught a glimpse of grayish-black fur running. It stops briefly to stare at me and it looks a lot like a pig with a light-striped collar circling its shoulders. I look closer and spot several more that seem to blend in with their surroundings. I have spotted some collared peccaries, also known as javelinas. I make no sudden movements. They stare back and then quietly go about their daily routine of surviving in the Chihuahuan Desert. It was a real treat to unexpectedly see these fascinating animals. Many visitors to the Southwest are not familiar with the javelina and do not realize its amazing ability to live in a harsh desert environment.

The javelina can weigh up to 45-60 pounds and is the size of a fairly large dog. It is not a true member of the pig family even though there are certain similarities. Its short legs give it a distinctive gait when running. The males have fierce looking tusks that are straighter than the curved tusks of a wild hog. Javelina is Spanish for javelin or spear and led to the Spanish name for these animals because of the appearance of their tusks. They usually travel in groups of 10 or more containing all ages and both sexes. This provides protection for the younger animals. It is interesting that females go away from the group when giving birth so other adult javelinas do not eat the young. However, the newborn is up and about in just a few days and mother and young rejoin the group. They are, for the most part, non-aggressive animals and cause few problems for humans.

These unusual looking animals are truly experts in surviving in the desert. Being able to adapt to the desert environment conditions is an important attribute. We do it in many ways including the clothes we wear, sunscreen, and taking the proper supplies and equipment. Animals, such as the peccary, adapt using amazing characteristics nature provides. Water is precious for survival and javelinas can be found around water sources such as springs and streams. They can also get moisture through eating one of its primary food sources—prickly pear cactus. Javelinas are able to bite into prickly pears, avoid the spines by holding the pad with their feet and stripping off the outer layer to get to the moist internal part of plants—a tough way to eat and drink. The javelinas seem to have a high tolerance for pain, especially around their mouths and they have kidneys that allow them to excrete poisonous oxalic acids found in cacti. This allows them to use a food/water source not available to most animals. It is important for them to have several means to get water since they do not have sweat glands and cannot prevent overheating from evaporative moisture through panting. Most of the time they feed on hot days only in the early morning and late evening. When hiking in the desert, at times one can notice rocks recently overturned and sections of plants such as sotols uprooted—evidence of the javelinas feeding. They are versatile in eating a wide variety of vegetation along with prickly pear. Their food also includes insects and reptiles. These characteristics make for a tough animal using all their senses. In fact, javelinas give off a strong scent from a gland on their rump. They mark their territory with the scent and individuals keep in contact with the herd through their sense of smell.

Think about other animals, such as skunks, where smell is essential for their survival. In the animal world, it pays to be smelly at times. Their sense of hearing is good, although eyesight does not play an important role in their survival. They communicate with each other by making distinctive sounds for aggressive, submissive, and alert behavioral actions. They will also raise hairs on their backs when excited to make themselves look larger and more threatening. By traveling in groups, using their sense of smell, and communicating with sound, javelinas increase their chances of avoiding predators such as bobcats, mountain lions, and coyotes.

You may not see a javelina during your visit to the region. However, when out hiking or driving you never know when they unexpectedly might cross your path. One of the exciting aspects of a national park is the serendipity factor when looking for wildlife. A javelina may make an appearance for you around the next bend in the trail or road. This odd looking creature with its ability to survive in a harsh desert environment is out there waiting to surprise you.



Front  
1.8in x 1.6in



Back  
1.6in x 1.5in

**Javelina tracks are smaller than deer tracks and the front hoofprints are noticeably blunted. Look for javelinas near Manzanita Springs, McKittrick Canyon Entrance Road, and Williams Ranch Road.**

# Area Attractions



## Brantley Lake State Park

(505) 457-2384  
Open all year—24 hours/day.  
Wheelchair accessible.

### Fees

Day Use Only —\$5.00/vehicle  
Camping—\$14.00/night  
(\$10.00 fee for each additional  
vehicle driven into same site)  
Primitive Camping Area  
—\$8.00 per vehicle/night

Located 12 miles north of  
Carlsbad on U.S. 285, the  
campground has 51 sites with  
water and RV electric hookups  
(a few with sewer), a dump  
station, playground, restroom  
with hot showers, shelters,  
tables, and grills.

Other facilities include  
picnic areas with sheltered  
tables and grills, playground, a  
fishing dock, boat ramps with  
docks, and a visitor center.

## Living Desert State Park

(505) 887-5516  
Open daily except December 25.  
Wheelchair accessible.

### Fees

Ages 13 and up—\$5.00  
Children 7 to 12—\$3.00  
Children 6 and under—free  
Group(20+) discounts available.

### Winter Hours

Labor Day to Memorial Day,  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Last tour entry—3:30 p.m.



### Summer Hours

Memorial Day to Labor Day  
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Last tour entry—6:30 p.m.

Come face to face with a mountain lion at this unique zoo and botanical garden offering an opportunity to experience the Chihuahuan Desert first-hand. See a large collection of live animals, including the rare Mexican gray wolf, and the roadrunner, New Mexico's state bird. There is also an unusual collection of cacti and other succulents from around the world.

The park is located high atop the Ocotillo Hills overlooking the northwest edge of Carlsbad, just off Highway 285 and features exhibits, an art gallery, gift shop, and refreshments.

## Lincoln National Forest

(505) 885-4181

The forest encompasses 285,000 acres for hiking, caving, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, hunting and sightseeing.

Maps are available at the Guadalupe Ranger District Office located in the Federal Building, 114 S. Halagueno, Room 159, in Carlsbad.

### Sitting Bull Falls

Wheelchair accessible.  
Day use only—no camping.  
Entrance fee—\$5.00 per car.

Seven miles southwest of State Highway 137 on Forest Route 276, this 130 foot falls is one of the highest in New Mexico. Picnic area, trails, and restroom.

### Five Points Vista

Eleven miles south of State Highway 137 on Forest Route 540. A panoramic view of the desert from the top of the Guadalupe Mountains. Interpretive signs explain natural features.

