

St Ann - Manchester, NEPA, Bat Caves

RS Stewart

Based on fieldwork carried out August, 2009

Sites are listed in chronological order. Priority list precedes the details:

High priority:

McLean Cave

Mosely Hall Cave

New Green Cave

Medium priority:

Coventry Cave

Hulls Cave

Lighthole Cave

New Hall Cave

Retreat Gully Cave

Smokey Hole Cave

Low priority:

Hopeton Bat Cave

Thunder Cave

Lighthole Cave: August 17, 2009

Position: 18 18 27.4 N, 77 11 46.3 W, WGS84; 729258 E, 684058 W, JAD2001

Owner: Windalco.

Type: Chamber Cave, with two entrances (scramble on west, lighthole on north).

Vegetation at entrances: scrub. Vegetation in area: pasture.

Dark zone: 10%

Bat numbers: <500

Priority: Medium

Thunder Cave: Aug 19, 2009

Position: 18 23 09.0, 77 25 47.4 WGS84; 704578, 692758

Land Owner: private

Type: Dry passage

Vegetation at entrances: scrub. Vegetation in area: farm/secondary forest.

Dark zone: 0%

Bat numbers: <50 (the passage is only about 2.5m high, and we were able to count almost every one of the few bats that were roosting in the cave – we saw 33.

Priority: Low

Retreat Gully Cave: Aug 19, 2009

Position: 18 22 35.9, 77 25 44.4 WGS84; 704663, 691740

Land Owner: private

Type: Dry passage

Vegetation at entrance: secondary forest. Vegetation in area: Farm/forest

Dark zone: 35%

Bat numbers: <500. Many of the bell-holes are unoccupied. The roost could support many more bats. Anecdotal accounts indicate that it did in the past. Substantial guano mining has taken place within the last decade, and continues at a low-level. The roost is degraded but could recover if left alone, such as in the case of McLeans.

Priority: Medium

Hulls Cave: Aug 19, 2009

Position: 18 15 23.3, 77 19 57.0; 714838, 678418

Land Owner: Hull family. No contact number.

Type: Shaft to cave

Vegetation at entrances: Scrub. Vegetation in area: Farm/scrub.

Dark zone: 0%

Bat numbers: >500. Numbers are probably around 1000. Bat roost was un-entered before our exploration in March 2009. The second visit on Aug 19 was to carry out a survey. Care was taken, and we will make it the last entry. Guano deposits are thick, and undisturbed.

Priority: Medium

Coventry Cave: August 20, 2009

Position: 18 21 18.3, 77 06 16.9 WGS84; 738935, 689305

Owner: Undetermined

Type: Chamber

Vegetation at entrance: Scrub. Vegetation in area: Secondary forest/farm.

Dark zone: 50%

Bat numbers: <500. Roost has suitable space for greater numbers (>1000). The cave has experienced low-level guano mining for some time. A ladder is in place to facilitate this.

Recovery is likely if visitation ends.

Invertebrates included Mantidae, two species of araneae in addition to the usual *G cavernicola*, Isopoda, Hemiptera, and three species of Coleoptera (Carabidae and Staphylinidae).

Three Taino petroglyphs were found, two are severely damaged by scratched graffiti.

Priority: Medium

Mosely Hall Cave

Aug 21, 2009

Position: 18 15 29.0, 77 01 48.7 WGS84; 746807, 678562

Owner: Anglin family (?). Contact: Walton Anglin, ph# 484 8986

Type: Complex chamber

Vegetation at entrance: Scrub. Vegetation in area: Scrub/farm

Dark zone: 90%

Bat numbers: >1000

Priority: High

New Hall Cave: August 25, 2009.

Position: 18 01 49.1, 77 28 36.6; 699510, 653419

Owner: Undetermined

Type: Complex

Vegetation at entrances: Scrub. Vegetation in area: pasture.

Dark zone: >95%

Bat numbers: Undetermined

Priority: Medium

Smokey Hole Cave: August 25, 2009

Position: 17 54 02.3, 77 30 26.0; 696253, 639076

Owner: Private.

Type: Cave to a shaft

Vegetation at entrance: Scrub. Vegetation in area: Scrub/farm.

Dark zone: 95%

Bat numbers: >1000

Priority: Medium. The roost is in good shape, but netting may be difficult.

New Green Cave

August 26, 2009

Position: 18 04 13.0, 77 31 06.5 WGS84; 695113, 657855

Owner: Entrance is between a church and a school.

Type: Complex

Vegetation at entrance: Scrub. Vegetation in area: Scrub/farm.

Dark zone: 95%

Bat numbers: >1000

Priority: High

Hopeton Bat Cave: Aug 27, 2009

Position: 18 00 57.2, 77 31 38.2 WGS84; 694164, 651838

Owner: Alpart.

Type: Dry passage.

Vegetation at entrances: Scrub. Vegetation in area: pasture.

Dark zone: 95%

Bat numbers: <500. Actual numbers are on the order of 100. There are very few bats in the cave, despite it's name. Part of the reason might be disturbance by Alpart. The lower parts of the cave are now blocked by washed-in rocks and silt.

Priority: Low++