

Bats! Podcast

Minnesota has seven bat species that are native to the state. They include the little brown bat, the big brown bat, the northern myotis, the eastern pipistrelle, the silver haired bat, the eastern red bat, and the hoary bat. Of the seven species, all of them are found on the property sometime throughout the year, whether it is in the mine or on the surface.

Soudan Underground Mine State Park is one of the largest hibernacula for bats in the state. This means that we have a large number of bats that will utilize the mine as a place to hibernate. It is estimated that the mine houses 8,000 – 12,000 bats with the little brown bat being the most common.

Visitors that go on a tour underground could encounter some bats flying around either the cages, during the train ride, or in the stope. We check the cages to make sure they are bat free prior to loading, but there are occasions when a bat may fly into the cage. If you have an encounter with a bat, for example the bat lands on you or flies into you, please notify a park staff member immediately. We will attempt to catch the bat and send it in for testing.

Bats can carry the rabies virus, although it is rare to contract rabies from a bat. The Bat Conservation International says that, “bat rabies accounts for approximately 1 death in the United States each year.” Other animals including dogs, cats, raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes can also transmit the virus. Dogs far outpace any other animal in terms of rabies, accounting for 99% of the worldwide rabies cases, according to the Bat Conservation International.

If you watch what you are doing and avoid the bats – in other words don't try to touch a bat if you see it – you will limit any likelihood of having an encounter. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the bats at Soudan, please call the park office at 218-753-2245.

Narrator - James Pointer
Length in Minutes - 2:04
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