

Bats Involved in Overnight Cave Camping

Many people enjoy camping. While camping, caving, and wildlife adventures can be both fun and educational for many groups, there are some associated risks that participants need to recognize and take precautions to avoid. It is very common to find bats in caves. This is their natural environment, and we may expect to see individual bats or even groups of bats (colonies) that number into the thousands. The health concern about bats is that a small percentage may be infected with rabies, a fatal disease that can be transmitted to people through the bite of an infected animal.

During the weekend of February 23-24, a small number of bats were noticed to be flying in close proximity to individuals sleeping in an Indiana cave. At this point ISDH does not believe that any caver or camper has been bitten by a rabid bat or was otherwise exposed during recent camping events. However, since ISDH was made aware that many people were sleeping in the presence of live bats, we initiated an investigation to determine if any person was bitten or scratched by the bats that were present in the cave at the same time. New information on camping and bat exposure has been posted to the rabies education website available at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/20518.htm>.