



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Sauta Cave National Wildlife Refuge

Southeast Region

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Map not to scale

Welcome to Sauta Cave NWR

Sauta Cave NWR (known as Blowing Wind Cave NWR until 1999) is a 264 acre Refuge purchased in 1978 to provide protection for the federally endangered gray and Indiana bat and their critical habitat. The cave provides a summer roosting site for about 200,000 - 300,000 gray bats and a winter hibernaculum for both the gray and Indiana bats. There are two entrances into the cave on the Refuge but they are closed to the public.

As is the case with many large caves, rare and unique species occur in Sauta Cave. As a result, the Alabama Natural Heritage Program ranks the cave's biodiversity as a site of very high significance. Surprisingly, the cave is not a pristine one as it was used as a saltpeter mine during the Civil War, a nightclub during the 1920's, and a fallout shelter during the 1960's.

In addition to the rare fauna within the cave, the federally endangered Price's potato bean occurs on the Refuge. All 264 acres of habitat outside of the cave is predominately hardwood forest.



Sauta Cave lower entrance. Credit: USFWS

Refuge Facts:

- **Established:** Sauta Cave NWR was purchased in 1978 "... to conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species... or (B) plants... U.S.C. 1534 (Endangered Species Act of 1973)."
- **Acres:** 264
- **Formerly known as:** Blowing Wind Cave
- **Location:** Sauta Cave is located just above the Sauty Creek embayment of TVA's Guntersville Reservoir, 7 miles west of Scottsboro, AL.
- **Annual Visitors:** 5,000
- **Administered by:** Sauta Cave is a satellite Refuge of Wheeler NWR in nearby Decatur, AL. Sauta Cave NWR is currently unstaffed and all management activities are carried out by Wheeler NWR staff.
- **Wildlife:** It serves as a minor hibernation cave for federally endangered gray and Indiana bats and historically a major maternity cave for gray bats. The most recent a summer emergence count documented more than 300,000 - 400,000 gray bats. In addition to the rare fauna within the cave, the federally threatened Price's potato bean occurs on the Refuge.
- **Habitats:** Sauta Cave NWR consists of 264 acres of hardwoods. There are two entrances into the cave on the Refuge but they are closed to the public.

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