



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Jewel Cave
National Monument

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Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

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Jewel Cave Hosts Birds of Prey Program

JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT, SD – Jewel Cave National Monument is teaming up with the Black Hills Raptor Center in Rapid City for a special Birds of Prey Program on Saturday, June 29 at 1:00 p.m. The program is planned for the front patio of the visitor center and will highlight some of the native birds of prey commonly seen at the monument.

Although Jewel Cave is known for being one of the longest and most complex caves in the world, many visitors may not realize that the surface resources of the monument host a diversity of life. The open grassland and pocket of trees, caused by the Jasper Fire in 2000, are excellent habitats for small mammals. The nearby dead trees (snags) offer perching sites for birds of prey that feed on the smaller animals. Superintendent Larry Johnson states, “Visitors travel to Jewel Cave for guided tours; however, we enjoy offering additional educational activities and special events that engage our guests even further with the natural resources.”

Maggie Engler, Executive Director of the Black Hills Raptor Center, comments, “This program demonstrates a wonderful partnership between a non-profit organization and the National Park Service. In past years, we have witnessed large audiences for our live raptor programs, and afterwards, we have seen visitors purposely hike the monument’s trails in search of the larger bird species.”

Bird watching is a growing outdoor activity, and the Black Hills is wonderful for it. Johnson further comments, “It’s hard to say how many bird watchers visit Jewel Cave at any given time, but with eastern and western species overlapping in the area, bird watchers surely have opportunities to check species off on their life lists.” Some of the new exhibits at the monument also interpret the different species of birds on site, including a full-size red-tailed hawk in a large diorama.

For more information related to special events at Jewel Cave or for a schedule of cave tour times, visit the monument online at www.nps.gov/jeca. Interested birders are also welcome to call the visitor center at 605-673-8300 any day between 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

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Bald eagles are sometimes seen along the three-mile Canyons Trail at Jewel Cave during the summer season. NPS Photo / Karen Brooks

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