

Fern Cave National Wildlife Refuge

This 199-acre refuge in [Jackson County](#), near [Gurley](#), [Madison County](#), was established in 1981 to protect federally endangered gray and Indiana bats. Fern Cave contains the largest wintering colony of gray bats in the United States, and more than one million bats hibernate there annually. Cave fish, cave crayfish, and cave salamanders have been found in the vast subterranean maze that lies under the surface of the refuge. Multiple levels and miles of passageways feature stalactite- and stalagmite-filled rooms. The forested surface acreage conceals four hidden cave entrances and hosts the endangered American hart's-tongue fern, from which the cave gets its name.