UIS-BULLETIN

Union Internationale de Spéléologie

2009, volume 52, number 1
Edited in June 2009

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Impressum

http://www.uis-speleo.org/

Message from Fadi Nader Secretary General

Rueil-Malmaison, June 16, 2009

Dear cavers, dear friends,

This UIS Bulletin will be published a few weeks before our big reunion at the 15th International Congress of Speleology (ICS) in Kerrville – Texas (USA), from 19 to 26 July 2009. As of this minute, I am starting day- and night-dreaming about that week when I will meet as many cavers as I can and from not less than 50 different countries. I am looking forward for those exceptional moments.

The UIS is our big family where only the love for caves and karst remains the reference. This passion that we got, each one of us expresses it in different ways. Our explorers go all around the world to find hidden beauties and expose as well as share them to and with us as well

as the international community, others work on improving our techniques for our safety and joyful cave exploration, and some others are all the time pre-occupied with training for rescue and saving lives. We do have also our elite scientists who work in various disciplines of research and academia related to karst and caves. These are also a valuable asset of our community as they explain to us the beauty we see so we can be enchanted even more. They do help us to find more breathtaking galleries as well, and protect the one we discover. Protecting our caves is the legacy of UIS and all cavers of the world: we want our children to experience what we have experienced.

Our infrastructure includes five departments and as many as 25 commissions touching all possible themes concerned with caves and karst (If you find any new idea do not hesitate to propose a new commission or work group). Please check our website www.uis-speleo.org. See what interests you and pledge to give us a hand. Remember again that the UIS is YOU and that it is as much your own responsibility as your local caving club. I invite you to pass to action as you enter the ICS venue in Kerrville. Come, not to attend but to participate. We are all a big caving team, where each member has a role to play and where our success is shared by all.

Our organization has always been a “statement” of international friendship. Let us try to prove this statement one more time, and make our elders proud of us. Let us all join in celebrating this wonderful reunion of cave lovers.

Always your friend,
Fadi Nader

Status report
15th International Congress of Speleology
and 2009 U.S. National Speleological Society Convention:
Kerrville, Texas, USA, 19-26 July 2009

George Veni, Chairman, 15th International Congress of Speleology

The International Congress of Speleology (ICS) is the world's premier speleological event. A function of the International Union of Speleology (UIS), it is held once every four years in a location selected by the delegates of the UIS member nations. This year's ICS will be in Kerrville, Texas, USA on 19-26 July 2009. As of 7 June 2009, nearly 1,300 people from 51 countries have registered to share the results of their latest explorations, studies, and techniques. The National Speleological Society (NSS) of the United States will host the ICS in combination with its annual convention for a truly spectacular affair. All of the usual ICS and NSS events will occur, as well as some new ones. Some of the scheduled events include:

- The four opening lectures will have the world's leading experts describing the state-of-the-art in cave exploration, sciences, management, and the international speleological community. It will be followed by the opening gala reception to visit with those and other world-renown experts and cavers.
- Thirteen symposia on a wide variety of topics, plus many topical sessions, will host over 500 exciting talks from around the world.
- Meetings of international, regional, and national speleological committees and projects.
- More than a dozen special mid-week trips will cover all aspects of speleology.
- Excellent caving trips throughout the ICS week.
- Many tourist and family trips.
- Over 50 adult-supervised activities for children 7-17 years of age.
- International fund raising auction to support the UIS and NSS
- International vendors of speleological books and equipment.
- The International Cave and Karst Management Symposium.
- Three banquets.
- The landmark 500-page guidebook Caves and Karst of the U.S.A.
- The ICS Proceedings, which will total about 1,600 pages of detailed reports of the over 500 presented papers.

Despite 6 years of planning and work, this ICS is suffering a major problem never before experienced by an ICS. White Nose Syndrome (WNS) is a terrible affliction that first appeared in one U.S. cave in 2006 and has since spread and killed about a half million bats in the northeastern U.S. There is evidence that people may carry it from cave to cave. In response, the ICS has closed its caving trips in the now 17 affected states and has placed restrictions on ICS trips in the currently unaffected states:

- Caves with bat colonies will not be entered, except for a carefully selected few that have areas not visited by bats, are long distances from bat areas, and reaching them does not require entering areas used by bats.
- Decontamination procedures will follow all trips.
- Caving clothing and equipment used in the 17 affected states will not be brought to the ICS or used on ICS caving trips.

As a result, many caving trips around the country are canceled, and trips to the best caves in Texas are also cancelled. The ICS is suffering financially from this unexpected loss of income, and extra costs for decontamination supplies and other expenses. Much remains to be learned about WNS and how far it may potentially spread. The ICS is committed to not accelerating its distribution and giving biologists more time to discover its cause and, hopefully, a solution. Meanwhile, the heart of the ICS remains unaffected, where we will gather in meetings, socially, and in caves, to exchange ideas, renew old ties, and build new projects and friendships.

White Nose Syndrome : The Mystery That is Killing Bats

A mysterious disease has caused the death of an estimated one million bats in the eastern United States. The cause is unknown, but the affliction has been given the name "White Nose Syndrome," because of the appearance of a white fungus growing around the noses of infected bats.

White Nose Syndrome – or WNS – has been found in at least nine states and now threatens the major bat hibernacula of the southern and mid-western United States. WNS is now responsible for the greatest decline in North American wildlife in nearly a century.

Species affected to date include Myotis lucifugus, Myotis septentrionalis, Myotis Leibii, Perimyotis subflavus, Eptesicus fuscus, and the U.S. federally-endangered Myotis sodalis. Geographically, WNS has now spread to the outer margins of the habitats of several other bat species, including the federally endangered Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus, and Myotis grisescens.

The fungus implicated in WNS, Geomyces destructans, is a newly described and identified species. It has been cultured from WNS-affected bats in all of the states. In addition to the tell-tale nose appearance of the fungus, it may also appear on the bat's wings, ears, and tail. Subcutaneous damage is also common in affected bats.

However, bats affected with WNS do not always have the fungus growing on their bodies. Instead they may display abnormal behaviors. These include:

- Bats flying outside during the day in near or below freezing weather in the middle of winter;
- Bats moving from normal roosts deep inside caves or mines and clustering near the entrances;
- Dead or dying bats being observed on the ground or on buildings, trees, or other structures during the winter;
- Bats in caves or mines not arousing at all after human disturbance.

Scientists do no know if G. destructans is the sole cause of the bat deaths, or if it is merely an opportunistic pathogen, taking advantage of immune systems weakened by another biological or chemical agent. Some research is looking at whether the bats' immune systems themselves are compromised during deep torpor, and thus allowing the fungus to get a foothold.

The earliest evidence of WNS is in a 2006 photograph taken in a cave in New York State. Since then, hundreds of thousands of bats have died.

Mortality rates of 70% to 100% have been documented in the first year in many hibernacula found to have WNS, although the full progression of the disease is not yet fully known. In caves or mines where fewer than 100% of the bats died the first year, populations continued to decline in successive years.

Bats are essentially dying of starvation. Their stored fat reserves, needed to survive hibernation) are depleted long before the end of winter. There is research that shows the bats are arousing more frequently, and perhaps burning more precious energy during arousal.

It is not yet known if there are any resistant characteristics in surviving bats. However, a range of physical damage to wings and other body parts persists in bats that survive a winter in WNS-affected populations. It is suspected that bats that survive a winter may have difficulty capturing insects, due to damaged wings, and may also have difficulty giving birth or nursing bat pups. If so, this may mean an even longer recovery period for restoring bat populations to pre-WNS levels.

Bat to bat transmission of G. destructans has been proven in the laboratory, and the pattern in which WNS has spread between caves and mines appears to support this. There is also some evidence to suggest that humans may transport WNS from infected to clean sites, probably on clothes or equipment that aren't cleaned and decontaminated between visits to caves or mines.

Bats are an essential and beneficial part of

our ecosystem. They play a vital role in insect control, pollination, seed dissemination, and providing the major source of energy to other cave life in cave ecosystems through their guano.

Regularly consuming from half to their full body weight in insects each night, bats reduce the need for insecticides and pesticides, and are the major predator of night-flying insects.

Bats have played other significant roles in science and medicine. Bat research has enabled advancements in sonar, vaccine development, artificial insemination, and blood coagulation, just to name a few examples.

If WNS were to continue to decimate bat populations across North America and possibly beyond, the potential ecological impact would have far-reaching consequences, including pressure to use more chemicals in agriculture and forestry to control pests that would no longer have a significant predator.

The appearance of WNS has been recent and has progressed rapidly, outpacing the ability of private and public entities to respond. Private, government, and non-governmental organizations have scrambled to supply research dollars and field personnel to investigate WNS.

Educating the scientific community, the wildlife management community, the caving community, the media, and the general public has been an ongoing effort, as we continue to learn more about WNS and how we might contain it and hopefully overcome it.

We must do our part to implement strategies to slow the spread of WNS until science can find a solution. Please adhere to any cave and mine closure orders, and follow protocols for cleaning and decontamination of clothing and equipment.

For more information on WNS: www.caves.org/WNS

For up-to-date decontamination procedures: http://www.fws.gov/northeast/whitenose/FINALContainmentandDecontaminationProceduresforCaversJune2009.pdf

http://www.fws.gov/northeast/images/wns/3842close-upofnosewithfungus.jpg
Caption: Little brown bat; close-up of nose with fungus, New York, Oct. 2008.
Credit: Photo courtesy Ryan von Linden/New York Department of Environmental Conservation

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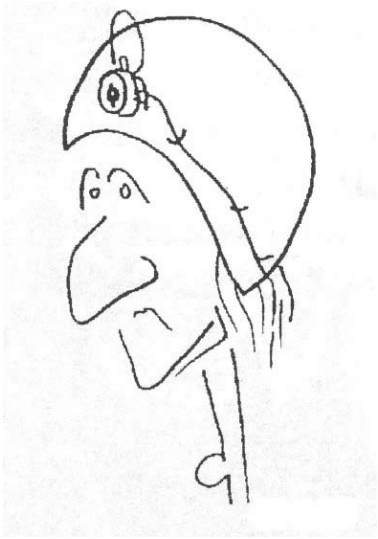
IN MEMORIAM
Claude Chabert (1939-2009)



The 4th of May 2009, my brother Claude succumbed to the ultimate attacks of a disease which had gradually deprived him of his intellectual abilities. A few years ago, he told me that he had enough plans - nearly all of them concerned caving - to live until the age of 140. The destiny did not allow him to live half of the time necessary to finish his work.

In his rich caving career, he explored and mapped many caves in Europe, Asia and the Americas. During his caving trips, - he did not like the word «expedition» for its colonialist connotations - often with Nicky, his companion, then his wife, he befriended many cavers all over the world.

His imaginative mind, his taste for intellectual ideas, for great philosophers, but also for surrealist poets, gave a piquant charm, a seductive and stimulating appeal to his brilliant conversation. Another aspect of his personality led him to make collections and inventories, to give great importance to details neglected by others. The results were the publication of books marking milestones in the history of speleology, but a few memorable and fruitful quarrels. With his intelligence, his liveliness, his cheerfulness, his conviviality, his determination, he was an original and friendly character who will be missed by the caving community.

Jacques Chabert

Claude CHABERT nous a quittés hier, lundi 4 mai, vers 17:30.

Pour tous – pour lui aussi, sans doute – c'est un soulagement. Depuis cinq ans –
peut-être davantage – il subissait les attaques de cette effroyable maladie d'Alzheimer. Né en 1939, il n'aura pas connu la retraite agréable qu'il s'était préparée. Au début, il bénéficiait de périodes de rémission, puis son état s'est inexorablement aggravé. Retiré chez son épouse Nicki, dans l'Yonne, il avait dû, dans les derniers mois, être hospitalisé dans une maison de retraite spécialisée.

Ce prof de philo était devenu polyglotte en voyageant. Et il voyagea principalement pour la spéléo : Turquie, Afghanistan, Inde, Liban, Indonésie, Bornéo, Mexique, Brésil... Je l'ai personnellement entendu soutenir une conversation en turc et l'un des derniers contacts que j'eus avec lui fut un

dîner en son domicile parisien, en compagnie d'un jeune couple de spéléos brésiliens. La conversation s'effectua presque exclusivement en portugais et j'imagine qu'il y fut brillant. Jasmine et moi nous sentions un peu exclus... De temps en temps, Claude, Nicki ou l'un des jeunes spéléos traduisait charitablement. La maladie s'était déjà déclenchée ; il était dans une période de rémission ; nous l'ignorions...

Présent au Spéléo-club de Paris depuis 1961, président de 1975 à 1980, il détient le record des publications de notre revue « Grottes & Gouffres ». Il publia également sur l'Yonne et la Nièvre. Son « Atlas des grandes cavités mondiales », co-écrit avec Paul Courbon, fut une des rares publications spéléologiques françaises traduite telle quelle en anglais. Son dernier ouvrage, « Atlas du Janelão », est un livre d'art un peu fou, ultime témoignage de sa passion dernière pour le karst brésilien.
Donc un exceptionnel spéléo d'exploration et d'étude, doublé d'un intellectuel aux affirmations quelque peu péremptoires – telles que le sont souvent celles des individus de caractère.
Les obsèques seront civiles et célébrées dans l'intimité. Si vous désirez envoyer un témoignage de sympathie à Nicky, c'est : Nicky CHABERT – 12 rue Carnot 89310 Nitry.

En souhaitant que son exploration dans l'au-delà lui inspire un bel atlas...

Spélaïon
Spéléo-club de Paris

Departments and Commissions News

UIS Protection Department Report 2005-2009

Hope for a European law to protect karst and caves in Europe.

The most important news since the 14th UIS Congress in "Kalamity" Greece is having been contacted by a Spanish European Deputy after the "Alpine Untertage Meeting" in Germany because they have a protection problem of an archaeological cave in Spain.
Bärbel Vögel (President of the German Federation), Christiane Grebe (FSUE Protection Commission) Spanish archaeologists and the president of the UIS Protection Department were invited by him to a meeting in Brussels to analyse how to be able to find the support of the European deputies to protect this cave and the other archaeological one.
We immediately reacted together to obtain action for the protection of karst and caves in general at a European level.
This young European Deputy from Spain is certainly the first political person I saw and met who is so motivated to protect karst and caves. He writes a motion and submits it to the signature of all the European Deputies. Unfortunately this written motion does not collect the 700 signatures of European deputies to open discussions at the European Parliament about the possibilities to build a European law. This Deputy was so motivated that he took part in the FSE European Congress in Vercors (FR).
The Department wrote to all the European UIS Delegates to do some lobbying to all the European Deputies of their own country asking them to sign this written proposal.
During this action, the Eurodeputies were sensitised and welcomed to a stand held by different people responsible for the protection of caves in Europe (Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia). Leaflets and symbolic spaghettis were distributed to them.
If the number of signatures obtained was insufficient, it was essential to heighten the Eurodeputies awareness of the problem.
This important goal is surely the most important one in protection matters for many years. We must put all our clout in this opportunity because it is the first one. As you know, it's always the first step that is the most difficult to take... If we missed a discussion in plenary session, we were nevertheless able to talk about this problem with the Directorate General involved. We will therefore still need the support of all the UIS delegates of the European countries.

Actions made and taken since 2005 by the UIS Department
1° In October 2005 sending of a letter to the Minister of the Environment in Bermuda to try to prevent beautiful caves being destroyed by a quarry.
2° Proposal to our Canadian colleagues to support their protection action for the Spaet Cave.
3° Sending a letter to the Governor of the Neuquén Province in Argentina who refuses free access to caves. In the other provinces this is of course not the case...
4° Sending a letter to the Presidency of the German Federation to inform them we are surprised that cavers cannot continue to investigate a new cave discovered during the drilling of a tunnel in the German Alps and to tell them it's very important to know what has happened in the karstic underground where big infrastructure works are carried out. For example, the CWEPSS (the Belgian protection commission) was designated by the Ministry to make a study on the specific risks in karstic areas. In Switzerland the ISSKA ensure the follow-up and the control of tunnel drilling...
5° Signature in the name of the UIS Protection Department of a "MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING" during the Alpin Untertage in Ramsau - Germany, November 2007 to develop a

strong partnership with 10 action points to protect and save the alpine karstic areas.
6° Draw the attention of the Macedonian people, authorities and cavers to the dangerous pollution they made in the karstic areas near Skopje.
7° The UIS Department was present and took part in different meetings and reflection groups: Brazilian Federation Congress (06.2006), Alpin Untertage – Germany (11.2007), 12th Speleological Congress of the SSS (11.2007) – 13th Symposium of Vulcanospeleology in Jeju South Korea (09.2008).
8° The department also invested in raising the awareness of Iranian cavers during the UIS speleological expedition in that country: ISEI 2009 (09.2008).
9° Request the management of the Grutas de Mira de Aire (Portugal) to withdraw the concretions exposed in the mineralogical showcases presented at the end of the visit.
10° Follow up the file regarding the sale of speleotems from China in Belgium, amongst other countries, and give support to the Philippine colleagues to try to stop or even ban this practice.
11° Regular contacts and exchange of informations with the ISCA.
12° Promotion of a new type of lighting with LED for the show caves.

Bartholeyns Jean-Pierre, 05.05.2009

10th International Symposium on Pseudokarst in Gorizia (Italy) - 29th April-2nd May 2008

Jan Urban, Ludovit Gaál

The 10th International Symposium on Pseudokarst was held in Gorizia, Friuli Venezia Giulia, NE Italy in 29th April-2 May 2008. The main organizers of the Symposium were Pseudokarst Commission UIS, Centro Ricerche Carsiche "C. Seppenhofer" and Societa Speleologica Italiana. The Chairman of the Organizing Committee was Maurizio Tavagnutti, but he was efficiently supported by a group of pretty ladies, as well as Mauricio Comar, who guided the field session. In the Symposium 63 participants from 11 countries (Austria, Brazilia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Russia and Slovakia) attended.

Gorizia is a picturesque, old town situated at the Italian-Slovenian boundary, on the foothills of the Pre-Alps. The town divided by boundary, is now – in European Union – the place of people and nations' encounters and exchange of ideas. This role it fulfilled also as a place of the Symposium on Pseudokarst.

The first session of the Symposium (30th April) was held in the medieval Castle of Gorizia (now museum), towering over the old city. The participants were welcomed by organizers, representatives of the Societa Speleologica Italiana and local authority, as well as President of the Pseudokarst Commission, I. Eszterhás and representative of UIS, J. P van der Pas. During the first day 10 lectures were presented. They concerned various aspects of the occurrence, genesis and development of non-karst caves and other pseudokarst landforms in many parts of the world, as: caves in sandstones in central Poland (J. Urban, A. Kasza), partly artificial cavities connected with the monasteries in Hungary (I. Eszterhás), lava tumulus caves in Iceland (P. Gadanyi), caves and cavities in unconsolidated rocks in Austria (R. Pavuza), pseudokamienitzas occurring in various rocks all over the world (F. Cucchi), caves in volcanic rock in the Matra Mts., Hungary (I. Eszterhás, G. Szentes), caves and other pseudokarst forms in Jordan (M. Comar), flysch rocks and landforms developed in them in east Italy (G. Calandri, D. Gobis), archaeological investigation in the Saxonian/Bohemian sandstone region, Germany, Czech Rep. (V. Peša) and primary caves in the Late Quaternary volcanics in Slovakia (L. Gaál, I. Balciar). After the scientific session the first part of the Pseudokarst Commission meeting took place in the castle.

The second-day session (1st May) was held in the Hotel Internazionale in Gorizia. The spectrum of problems, landforms and regions was not less than a day before. The lectures presented in this day, concerned: network of caves and deep passages Poseidon in the sandstone Teplicke Skaly rock town, Czech Rep. (R. Mlejnek, V. Ouhrabka, V. R□□i□ka), measurements of micro-morphological changes of the rock surfaces in Italy (S. Furiani, F. Cucchi), pseudokarst caves in sandstone of the Leningrad province, Russia (Y. Lyakhnitsky, M. Vdovets), pseudokarst caves in the pyroclastic rocks of North Sardinia, Italy (J. de Waele, L. Sanna, A. Rossi), pseudokarst landforms in Sahara (G. Calandri, D. Gobis), features of karst aquifers in the Zagros Mts., Iran (A. Afrasiabian), caves in the quartzites of Amazon region, Brasil (S. Ayub), measurement of the lichen's impact on the rock surface in Italy (F. Cucchi, S. Furlani, L. Zini, M. Tretiach), pseudokarst forms in the syenite of Malawi (G. Calandri, D. Gobis). The last item of this session was a presentation of the area of the next Symposium – Saxony in Germany (H. Simmert).

After this session, the second part of the Pseudokarst Commission meeting was held. During both meetings the Commission members recapitulated activity of the Commission and events taking place during the last two years: 9th International Symposium, Bartkowa, Beskidy Mts, Poland (24-26th May, 2006) and proceedings of this Symposium, 12th Symposium on Volcanospeleology in Topoztlán, Mexico (8-13th July, 2007), International Conference on Granite Caves, La Coruña, Spain (17-22th September 2007), International Working Meeting on Root Structures in Pseudokarst Caves, Teplice nad Metují,

Czech Republic (21-23th September, 2007). The Commission members expressed their greetings to organizers of the past events and current Symposium. Then they discussed the future events: 13th International Symposium on Volcanospeleology, Jeju, Korea (1-10th September 2008), and 15th Congress of UIS, Kerrville, Texas, USA (19-26th July 2009). The 11th International Symposium on Pseudokarst will be held in Saxony, Germany (May, 2010), whereas the next symposium (in 2012) is proposed in the Leningrad province, Russia or in Sweden, possibly Finland. Problem of the "Newsletter" and other ways of promotion of the Commission were discussed. The internet homepage of the Pseudokarst Commission will be made.

The last item of the assembly was an election of the Commission functionaries. I. Eszterhás announced, he was not available as a candidate for the presidential function. The following members were elected: Ji□í Kopecký (honorary president), István Eszterhás (honorary president), Jan Urban (president), Rudolf Pavuza (vice-president), Ludovít Gaál (secretary), and members: Maurizio Tavagnutti, Marcos Vaqueiro, Hartmut Simmert, Ahmad Afrasibian, Marina Vdovets and Soraya Ayub. New president acknowledged for the confidence and thanked I. Eszterhás for his work as a president of the Pseudokarst Commission.

The next day of the Symposium (2nd May) its participants spent mainly out of Gorizia, in the Pre-Alps. The main item of the field session was Grotta di Villanova – several kilometers long, but poorly branched cave formed in the flysch rocks. The flysch sequence is composed of sandstone, conglomerate and limestone beds as well as thin-bedded marls and claystones. In such a sequence the destructive impact of infiltrating water differs in each type of rocks. The process of chemical corrosion of limestone and carbonate clastics produces the initial conduits, whereas in the second phase of destruction, the karstification is reduced for the benefit of the mechanical erosion of clastics, marls and claystones. The forms of this complex speleogenesis – as initial karst fissures and large conduits produced by fluvial processes – can be observed in the cave. Walking in the show cave and its part

Photo. 4. The walls of Grotta di Villanova in many places are covered by picturesque calcite speleothems (Photo J. Urban).

Photo. 5. Jan Paul van der Pas, the President of the Commission on Volcanic Caves UIS, among the speleothems of Grotta di Villanova (Photo J. Urban).

inaccessible for public, we observed also specific creamy-white stalactites, stalagmites and flowstones.

The second item of the field-trip was Taipana area, famous for its karst phenomena. We visited there the “C. Seppenhofer” Karst Research Center and the karst cave Campo di Bonis.

The 10th Symposium on Pseudokarst was concluded and closed during the ceremonial dinner (2nd May evening). This last official part of the Symposium started from the performance of the folk dance group “Danserini di Lucinico”. Then we were given the certifications of participation in the Symposium and the Symposium was closed with the ceremonial transmission of the “Symposium Stick” to the organizers of the next Symposium in Saxony. Maybe less official but not less warm are our greetings for the organizers of the Symposium in Gorizia.

Photo. 3. The landscape of the Pre-Alps in the Villanova village and several participants of the Symposium (left to right): I. Eszterház (Hungary), L. Gaál (Slovakia), M. Vdovets (Russia), J.P. van der Pas (Netherlands), J. Urban (Poland), A. Afrasiabian (Iran) (Photo W. Urban).

Photo. 1. Maurizio Tavagnutti, the Chairman of the Organising Committee, welcomes the participants of the Symposium during its first scientific session in Gorizia (photo L. Gaál).

Photo. 2. The participants of the Symposium in front of building of the Centro Ricerche Carsiche “C. Seppenhofer” in the Taipana village (photo L. Gaál).

Report of activity of the Pseudokarst Commission of UIS between 2005 and 2009

Functionaries of the Commission in the period of May 2006- May 2009:
Jiří Kopecký (honorary president), István Eszterhás (president), Rudolf Pavuza (vice-president), Ludovít Gaál (secretary).
Members: Maurizio Tavagnutti, Jan Urban, Marcos Vaqueiro.

Functionaries of the Commission since May, 2009:
Jiří Kopecký (honorary president), István Eszterhás (honorary president), Jan Urban (president), Rudolf Pavuza (vice-president), Ludovít Gaál (secretary).
Members: Ahmad Afrasibian, Soraya Ayub, Hartmut Simmert, Maurizio Tavagnutti, Marcos Vaqueiro and Marina Vdovets.

The assemblies of Pseudokarst Commission:
- 25th September 2005, during the 14th Congress of UIS in Kalamos (Greece),
- 25th May 2006, during the 9th International Symposium on Pseudokarst in Bartkowa (Poland),
- 30th April and 1st May 2008, during the 10th International Symposium on Pseudokarst in Gorizia (Italy).

Events (meetings):
- The 9th International Symposium on Pseudokarst in Bartkowa (Poland), 24-26th May 2006, organized by Jan Urban. In the symposium 60 participants from 12 countries took part, 30 lectures were delivered and several posters were presented. During the field trips the caves in the Beskid Sądecki Mts. and Beskidy Foothills were visited.
- The International Conference on Granite Caves in La Coruña (Spain), 17-22th September 2007 organized by Marcos Vaqueiro and Juan Ramón Vidal Romani. 39 authors had 21 lectures and 5 posters in conference. Excursions: O Pindo granite massif (with 905 m long granite cave O Folón), granite caves of the Sierra do Galiñeiro.
- The International Working Meeting on Root Structures in Pseudokarst Caves in Teplice nad Metují (Czech Republic), 21-23th September 2007, organized by Jiří Kopecký.
- The 10th Symposium on Pseudokarst in Gorizia (Italy), 29th April to 2th May 2008, organized by Maurizio Tavagnutti. In the symposium 63 participants from 11 countries took part and 20 papers were presented. During the field trip the Grotta di Villanova cave and Campo di Bonis were visited.

Publications:
- The proceedings of the symposium in Poland were published in the "Nature Conservation" vol. 63 (6) 2007, periodic of the Institute of Nature Conservation, Polish Academy of Sciences as well as in the "Zacisk", special number of bulletin of the Speleoclub Bielsko-Biala. Editor: Jan Urban.
- The proceedings of the International Conference on Granite Caves were published in Cadernos Nr 33, journal of La Coruña University. Editors: Juan Ramón Vidal Romani and Marcos Vaqueiro.
- Internal issue of Pseudokarst Commission Newsletter is issued twice a year. Editor: Istvan Eszterhás.

Future events:
The 11th Symposium on Pseudokarst will be held in in Königstein near Dresden (Germany) in 2010.

Ludovít Gaál — Secretary

Jan Urban — President

International Conference
Hypogene Speleogenesis and Karst Hydrogeology of Artesian Basins
Chernivtsi, Ukraine, May 13-17, 2009

The International Conference "Hypogene Speleogenesis and Karst Hydrogeology of Artesian Basins" had been held in Chernivtsi, Ukraine, in May 13-17, 2009. It had been organized under auspices of the Union International of Speleology (UIS) and its Commission on Karst Hydrogeology and Speleogenesis, International Geoscience Program 513 "Global Study of Karst Aquifers and Water Resources" (UNESCO) and the International Year of Planet Earth (UNESCO-IUGS).

The principal organizer of the Conference was the Ukrainian Institute of Speleology and Karstology (UISK). The co-organizers and sponsors of the Conference include:

- Fed'kovich Chernivtsy National University, Ukraine
- Vernadsky Tavrichesky National University, Ukraine
- Institute of Geological Sciences, National Academy of Science, Ukraine
- National Cave and Karst Research Institute, USA
- Karst Water Institute, USA
- Silesian University, Poland
- Katowice Section of the Polish Geographic Society, Poland
- Ukrainian Speleological Association

The current surge in recognition of the broad occurrence and significance of hypogene speleogenesis (i.e. speleogenesis driven by groundwater and aggressiveness coming from depth), as well as of its marked specifics in comparison to better studied epigenic (hypergenic) karst (i.e. karst formed by groundwater coming from the overlying or immediately adjacent surfaces) has stimulated intense theoretical and regional studies on the topic worldwide. Timely exchange of ideas and results of ongoing studies is particularly important during this period. The Conference, therefore, aimed to provide such a possibility, and to overview the current developments and advances in the area. The specific reason for conducting this Conference in the Western Ukraine was the representativeness of the region and its caves for the evolving theory of hypogene speleogenesis.

The Conference venue was the historic main building of the Fed'kovich Chernivtsi National University and the Bukovina Hotel in Chernivtsi.

Fifty three scientists and cave explorers have attended the Conference, representing 23 nations including: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, France, Great Britain, Germany, Greece, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Russia, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and United States.

During two days of scientific sessions (13 and 14 of May) thirty three papers were presented. The Conference has culminated with a panel discussion centered on the problem of definition and criteria of identification of hypogene speleogenesis. The discussion has been very stimulating and thoughts-provoking, and revealed many aspects still to be studied and clarified, as one could expect for the rapidly evolving area. It is quite evident, however, that the growing understanding of nature, regularities and the broad occurrence of hypogene speleogenesis signifies the ongoing change of the karst paradigm and is of a great importance for theoretical karstology and geospeleology. This understanding is also crucial for our ability to adequately resolve problems of karst groundwater resources protection and management, karst sinkhole/subsidence hazard prediction and mitigation, as well as for prospecting and exploration of oil and gas resources and other economic deposits.

During the following three days (May 15-17), field trips through the gypsum karst of the Western Ukraine have been conducted. The trips served to illustrate scientific and practical aspects of hypogene speleogenesis, karst hydrogeology of artesian basins, and engineering geology of covered karst. The trips were designed to demonstrate a spectrum of evolutionary types of karst and some of the outstanding gypsum caves present in the region, including Kristal'na, Yubileyna, Ozerna and Zoloushka caves. The latter two are among the world longest caves, with their respective lengths of 128 and 92 km. Although the Conference participants have visited the area around Optymistychna Cave, the second longest cave in the world and the longest one in gypsum, it was not possible to visit this cave because the morphology of its extensive entrance series is not suitable for quick visits by large groups. The field trips also included a number of sites of cultural importance. The Conference participants gratefully acknowledged an assistance of cavers from speleological clubs of Ternopil, Chernivtsi and Kishinev (Moldova) in arranging the visits to the caves they explore and manage.

For the Conference, the organizers have published the proceedings volume containing full texts of most papers, and several books relevant to the topic (see references below), which will be valuable contribution to the upcoming 15th International Congress of Speleology (July-August 2009, Kerrville, USA).

By the unanimous opinion of the participants, the Conference has been of a great success. It continued a series of the topic event that started with the Hypogene Speleogenesis Symposium held within the GSA Meeting in Houston, USA, in October 2008, organized by the US National Cave and Karst Research Institute. In view of the rapid developments in the field, it seems desirable to have specific events on Hypogene Speleogenesis regularly during next several years.

Dr. Alexander Klimchouk,
Conference Chairman,
Vice-President, International Union of Speleology
Director, Ukrainian Institute of Speleology and Karstology

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Books published for the Conference:

Klimchouk, A.B. and Ford, D.C. (eds.). Hypogene Speleogenesis and Karst Hydrogeology of Artesian Basins. Ukrainian Institute of Speleology and Karstology, Special Paper 1, Simferopol, 2009. - 292 pp. ISBN 978-966-2178-38-8.

The volume contains papers presented during the International Conference held May 13 through 17, 2009 in Chernivtsi, Ukraine.

For the list of contents, visit
http://www.network.speleogenesis.info/directory/bibliography/karstbase/item_view.php?biblio_id=9748

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Klimchouk A.B., Andreychouk V.N., and Turchinov I.I. The structural prerequisites of speleogenesis in gypsum in the Western Ukraine. The 2-nd edition, revised. University of Silesia - Ukrainian Institute of Speleology and Karstology, Sosnowiec- Simferopol. - 97 p. ISBN 978-83-87431-94-5

In this book geological the conditions of speleogenesis in the Miocene gypsum in the Western Ukraine are characterized, particularly the role of lithological and structural prerequisites in speleogenesis. The special attention is given to structural and textural unhomogeneities in the gyp-

sum stratum and to their role in the formation of fractures. Fracture networks in the gypsum and the structure of the unique maze cave systems are examined in details. It is shown that speleo-initiating fractures in the gypsum strata belong to the lithogenetic type and form largely independent multi-storey networks, with each storey being confined within a certain vertical structural/textural zone (unit) of the stratum. This determines the multi-storey structure of the caves in the region.
Two problems related to structural and textural characteristics of the gypsum stratum are discussed in details: the formation of giant dome structures by way of gypsum recrystallization during the synsedimentary and early diagenesis stages, and the genesis of fractures. Speleogenetic realization of the existing structural prerequisites occurred under conditions of a confined multi-storey artesian aquifer system due to an upward flow across the gypsum from the under-gypsum aquifer.
The book may be of interest for karstologists, speleologists, engineering geologists, hydrogeologist, as well as for those who study lithology and petrography of evaporates.
Tables 2, ill. 29, bibl. 67.

http://www.network.speleogenesis.info/directory/bibliography/karstbase/item_view.php?biblio_id=9749

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Andreychouk V., Dublyansky Y., Yezhov Y., and Lysenin G. Karst in Earth-s Crust: distribution and the main types. University of Silesia - Ukrainian Institute of Speleology and Karstology, Sosnowiec- Simferopol, 2009. - 72 pp. ISBN 978-83-87431-93-8

Some problems of theoretical karstology are considered. An attempt is made to match the fundamentals of karstology and recent ideas on the structure of lithosphere and the vertical zoning of hydrosphere. Boundary conditions of karstogenesis and karst zoning are discussed. The boundaries and the structure of karstosphere, as well as the place of karst among other geological processes are defined. The book is of interest for karstologists, hydrogeologists, geologists and geographers.

http://www.network.speleogenesis.info/directory/bibliography/karstbase/item_view.php?biblio_id=9750

UIS Commission on Physical Chemistry and Hydrogeology of Karst Activities since 2005

by Yavor SHOPOV, President

The main activity of the commission was preparation of several meetings:-
1. International Symposium “Cave climate and Paleoclimate- Best Record of the Global Change- II”, Athens, 2005. This meeting was co-organised with IGCP 513 Project of IUGC- UNESCO. It was continuation of the Commission Workshop on “Cave Climate and Paleoclimate- Best Record of the Global Change” held in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria in 2002. Programme of the Symposium was very interesting and stimulating. The main purpose of this meeting was to return the leading role of UIS in this strategic modern topic which was completely developed by UIS in the past years and to try to enforce the UIS legislation on collection and preservation of speleothems in the international paleoclimatic community. The recent exponential growth of the paleoclimatic studies of speleothems from non- speleologists produce major problems of speleothem preservation, which require such actions. Another way for solution of this important caves preservation problem is to build a database of available speleothem samples and data measured from them. In 2002 it was decided to build such database in the commission. But such database would have limited popularity and access within non- speleologists and can not fulfil its purpose. So it was made in the most- popular paleoclimatic database- these of NOAA. Everybody are urged to submit their speleothem data and to use the posted data in order to safe speleothems. It is available at: http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/paleo/speleothem.html
Active international programmes of the Commission on “Speleothem Records of Environmental Changes” and “Luminescence of Cave Minerals” reported the advance in the field produced by their operation.
2. Post – 14th UIS Congress scientific field trip in Bulgaria, 2005.
3. A special session on "Luminescence Chronology and Climatic Records" in conjunction with the General Assembly of the European Geosciences Union (EGU), Vienna, Austria, 2-7 April 2006. It was focused mainly on speleothems. It was a great opportunity to introduce the karst and cave research to the general Geosciences researchers, because the whole meeting was attended by more than 3000 geoscientists from all over the world. Most of them had vague idea about the speleologic and karst research.
The international program of the Commission on “Luminescence of Cave Minerals” reported the advance in the field of speleothem paleoluminescence records of environmental changes produced by its operation.
The abstracts of the meeting were printed in Geophysical Research Abstracts.
Commission introduced new activity- help in development of the cave and karst research in countries with underdeveloped karst studies. It helped with methodological advices and information on location of caves and previous cave research in India. In spite of the giant territory of India very few caves are known and described there. Almost all cave research in India was done by foreigners (mainly by German speleologists). Recently few Indian scientists got interested in speleological research (mainly in biospeleology and speleothem research). They received useful help from the commission.
Commission spotted several countries with great potential in cave development but with underdeveloped speleology, including Afganistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, Bhutan etc. We are conducting active search of contacts with local researchers in this countries to establish continuous speleological research there. These countries do not have national speleological organizations yet and are not UIS members. Their involving in speleology would extent significantly our knowledge about caves and karst in this less investigated part of the world.
Accordingly with the decisions of the second commission meeting during the 14th UIS Congress we started preparation of a monograph on “Speleothem Achieves of Environmental Changes”. We are searching potential publishers of this important and useful book.

Report of the commission Cave-Rescue of the Union International of Speleology between 2006 and 2009

By Christian DODELIN, president of the commission.

The organizations of cave rescue are setting up, developing and need to organize and group by continent or proximity. The commission contributes to these meeting and encourages the actions between countries. It is its main objective. In this paper, I will only present the actions in which I was involved as president of the commission.

During 2006 :

- First we published a **list update of the rescue leaders** in all the countries. All countries, whether they have an official structure or not. We inform about the aim of the commission: to provide contact, information and help regarding material, techniques, curses or even extra people in case of emergency.
- **China : caving curse during an expedition French-Chinese-Japanese in april 2006 in Guizhou.** This Chinese team is the first rescue team in China. They intervened during the 2008 earthquake and recently in 2009 the evacuation of a dead people in a 200m deep hole.
- **Meeting with Hungary cavers** to **prepare the XI° conference** of the cave rescue commission of the UIS for the next year.
- **International Rescue training** organized by the French cave rescue in automn 2006 in Jura mountains (France).

We received **29 trainees** coming from 9 countries:

2 Romania, 2 Lebanon, 1 Australia, 2 Slovaquia, 4 Poland, 3 Serbia, 6 Slovenia, 4 Croatia, 5 Spain. Two people are reporting to the commission for a continent : Badr Jabbour Gedeon from Lebanon and Joe Sydney from Australia.

We received André Slagmolen, the last president of the cave rescue commission of the UIS.

During 2007 :

- **André Slagmolen died. At the interment in Belgium his cavers and friends were near his family. He was the last President of the cave rescue commission of the UIS.**
- **Rescue statistics in 2006 for 16 countries:** the total strength, formation, administrative situation, accidents.
- **XI° symposium of the cave rescue commission at Aggtelek (Hungary) from 15 to 18 may 2007**. Meeting of 200 cavers coming from all the continents and from 24 countries. In addition to some communications about the situation of the countries, there was a meeting of the management committee.

The participants prepared a declaration concerning the organization of cave rescue team. We proposed it to the federations « declaration of Aggtelek » (have a look in annex).

- **5° CONGRES OF THE FEALC (Federacion Espeleologica de America Latina y del Caribe)**

29 July to 4 August 2007 it was at the University of Aguadilla at Puerto Rico. Participation at this congress and communications about cave rescue training. Participation in UIS board meeting.

- **Ramsau (Germany) 10-11 november 2007**. In response to German and Austria needs, setting up the European Alpin Karst Cave Rescue team. 7 countries are involved : Germany, Austria, Croatia, France, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland.

In 2008 :

- **3rd Argentina Cave Federation congress**. 3 to 8 February 2008 in Malargue (Argentina). Present to the support convention between FEALC and FES (European Speleology Federation).

Cave rescue training for Argentin cavers with Italian cavers.

- **Cave rescue training in Russia with Bernard Tourte (France) and Sergio Garcia de la Vega (Spain) :**

This 2nd training took place in Russia from 1 to 8 June 2008 and was about cave rescue technics It has been attended by 29 trainees (caver or professional rescuer).

- **International cave-rescue training in France**

From 31 August to 7 September 2008 in Aillon-le-Jeune (France)

Christian Dodelin organized this SSF training in Bauges mountains (Savoy). Training personnal came from France and Spain. 26 trainee joined from 10 different countries:

2 Romania, 2 Italy, 5 Spain, 4 Japan, 3 Poland, 3 Ireland, 7 Croatia
3 cavers attended part of the training : 2 Russian, 1 Belgium.

- **PUBLICATIONS :**

« Técnicas verticais para espeleologia » Manual de referência

This book has been published by RedeSpeleo from Brazil. It presents basic equipment, nodes, equipment techniques. Last chapter is about uncommon techniques and self rescuing.
Written by Daniel Menin and Daniel Viana, it is the outcome of an important collaborative work between Brazilian and French cavers.
In France, rescue equipment tests led to a new edition of **Rescuer manual,** available in English, French and Spanish.

- **Tyrolean Pierre Rias**

A movie presents the setting up, test done in July, and strong moments in august 2008 of this 1km100 tyrolean, new worldwide record. It used cave-rescue techniques.

- **The SSF (French cave rescue) diving team organized a rescue training in Switzerland with Switzerland cave-rescue team.**

The aim was to show the efficiency of the light diving stretcher in a sump. This stretcher has been previously tested in France in a 1600m long 60m deep sump.

- **Alpin Karst Cave Rescue Team**

The team met in April in Munich to fix coming years projects and meetings. Members exchanged on the administrative aspect in their countries.

Bilan pluriannuel de la commission spéléo-secours de l'UIS Entre 2006 et 2009

Par Christian DODELIN, président de la commission

Les équipes de spéléo secours se créent, se forment. Elles ont besoin de s'organiser et de se regrouper par continent ou voisinage. La commission contribue à ces rapprochements et mise en lien entre les pays. C'est sa mission première. Les actions présentées ici sont celles où je me suis trouvé impliqué en tant que président de la commission spéléo secours.

En 2006 :

- La première action a été de **mettre à jour la liste des responsables secours par pays**. Que ces pays soient structurés ou en cours de structuration. Mise en lien et information sur les objectifs de la commission : permettre à chacun de trouver les informations et le soutien en matière de secours que ce soit sur le matériel, les techniques, les formations voir le renfort d'autres pays en cas de secours réels.
- **Chine : au cours d'un camp d'exploration Franco-Chinois-Japonais en avril 2006 dans le Guizhou,** réalisation d'un stage de formation sur les techniques de bases. Ce groupe Chinois constitue la première équipe de secours spéléo en Chine qui interviendra au cours du tremblement de terre de 2008 et récemment en 2009 par la sortie d'une victime décédée en tombant dans un puits de 200 mètres.
- **Visite aux spéléos Hongrois** pendant leur rassemblement annuel pour **préparer le XI° rassemblement** spéléo-secours de la commission l'an prochain.
- **Stage International** organisé par le spéléo secours français à l'automne 2006 dans le Jura (France).

Il a accueilli quelques **29 participants stagiaires** provenant de 9 pays :

2 Roumanie, 2 Liban, 1 Australie, 2 Slovaquie, 4 Pologne, 3 Serbie, 6 Slovénie, 4 Croatie, 5 Espagne. Parmi les participants des correspondants continents de la commission : Badr Jabbour Gedeon pour le Liban et Joe Sydney pour l'Australie.
Nous y avons reçu la visite pour la dernière fois d'André Slagmolen ancien président de la commission secours de l'UIS.

En 2007 :

- **Décès et inhumation d'André Slagmolen en Belgique, précédent Président de la commission spéléo secours de l'UIS.** Les spéléologues de Belgique ont apporté leur soutien à sa famille.
- **Bilan Secours 2006 auprès de 16 pays :** effectifs, formation, situation administrative, accidents.
- **XI° symposium de la commission spéléo secours à Aggtelek (Hongrie) du 15 au 18 mai 2007**. Elle a rassemblé plus de 200 spéléologues venant de tous les continents et de 24 pays. En plus des communications faisant état de la situation des pays il y a eu une réunion du Comité Directeur de la commission.

Une déclaration des principes liés à l'organisation des équipes spéléo-secours a été élaborée par les participants. Elle est proposée à toutes les fédérations sous l'appellation « déclaration d'Aggtelek » (voir en annexe).

- **5° CONGRES DE LA FEALC (Federacion Espeleologica de America Latina y del Caribe)**

29 juillet au 4 aout 2007 à l'université d'Aguadilla à Puerto Rico. Participation au congrès et communications sur les stages secours. Participation à la réunion de bureau de l'UIS.

- **Ramsau (Allemagne) 10 et 11 novembre 2007**. Constitution du groupe Spéléo-secours des Karsts Alpins en Europe à la demande de l'Allemagne et l'Autriche. Il comprend 7 pays : Allemagne, Autriche, Croatie, France, Italie, Slovénie, Suisse.

En 2008 :

- **3°congrès de la Fédération de Spéléologie d'Argentine**. Du 3 au 8 février 2008 à Malargüe en Argentine. Présence à la signature de la convention entre la FEALC (Fédération de Spéléologie de l'Amérique Latine et des Caraibes) et la FES (Fédération Européenne de Spéléologie) pour un soutien des actions entre les fédérations ou leurs pays membres.

Communication et formation secours avec des spéléologues Italiens pour les Argentins.

- **Stage spéléo secours en Russie par Bernard Tourte (France) et Sergio Garcia de la Vega (Espagne) :**

C'est du 1er au 8 juin 2008 que s'est tenu en Russie, ce second stage de formation aux techniques de sauvetage souterrain. Il a été animé par des cadres de France et d'Espagne.
Celui-ci a rassemblé 29 stagiaires spéléologues ou professionnels des secours.

- **Stage Equipier/Chef d'Equipe Spéléo Secours International en France**

Du 31 août au 7 septembre 2008 à Aillon le Jeune (France)

Ce stage du SSF s'est déroulé dans le massif des Bauges en Savoie et a été mis en place par Christian Dodelin. Encadrement France et Espagne.

Il a accueilli quelques **26 participants stagiaires** venant de 10 pays différents :

2 Roumanie, 2 Italie, 5 Espagne, 4 Japon, 3 Pologne, 3 Irlande, 7 Croatie
Ont participé partiellement 3 spéléologues : 2 Russes, 1 Belge

- **PUBLICATIONS :**

« Técnicas verticais para espeleologia » Manual de referência
Cette publication est présentée par la RedeSpeleo du Brésil. On y trouve le matériel de base, les nœuds et les techniques d'équipement. Le dernier chapitre concerne les techniques d'exception et d'auto secours.
Les auteurs : Daniel Menin et Daniel Viana. L'important travail de collaboration qui a associé spéléos brésiliens et spéléos français trouve ici un aboutissement.
En France des tests sur le matériel de secours ont donné lieu à une réédition du **Manuel du sauveteur**, disponible également en anglais ou espagnol.

- **Tyrolienne Pierre Rias**

La présentation de cette tyrolienne en vidéo retrace à la fois la mise en place, les essais de juillet et les temps forts d'août 2008. Cette tyrolienne d'1 km 100 devient la plus longue du monde. Elle a été mise en place selon les techniques utilisées en spéléo secours.

- **L'équipe plongée du SSF(Spéléo Secours Français) s'est rendu en Suisse pour un exercice de Sauvetage en siphon dans le dernier trimestre 2008 en relation avec le Spéléo Secours Suisse.**

L'objectif étant de montrer les possibilités de la civière plongée light qui a été testé en France sur plus de 1 km 600 et menée à des profondeurs de -60m au cours d'exercice.

- **Groupe spéléo-secours des Karsts Alpins**

Le groupe s'est retrouvé en avril à Munich pour déterminer des projets de rencontre dans les années à venir. Cela a été l'occasion d'échanger sur les assises administratives des équipes secours de ces pays.

COMMISSION ON VOLCANIC CAVES
August 2005 – July 2009

Report by Jan Paul van der Pas (jpgvanderpas@hetnet.nl)

12th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology – August 2006 – Mexico: over 30 participants from four continents

13th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology – September 2008 – Korea: over 60 participants from four continents

12 Newsletters (#45 to #55), 200 pages

Website in operation since 2007. Designed by John Pint. Contains now proceedings of Symposia on Vulcanospleology (#1 to #12)
www.vulcanospeleology.org

Initiation of the WoMOVoc-project (World's Most Outstanding Volcanic Caves)
www.worldvolcaniccaves.org/pages/aboutus/

Some massive books about volcanic caves:
- The Underground World of Jeju Volcanic Island in Korea,by Prof. In-Seok Son – 267 pages, in Korean
- Íslenskir Hellar I & II, (Caves of Iceland), by Björn Hróarsson – 672 pages, in Icelandic

Confirming after July 2009:
- 14th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology – August 2009 Australia
- 15th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology – (?) 2012 Jordan
- Book "Lava Tubes and Lava Tube Caves" by Dr. Chris Wood

International Union of Speleology
Département de l'exploration,
Commission Plongée Souterraine

Lors de la réunion de la commission plongée Souterraine de l'UIS, à Kalamos (grèce le 27 aout 2005). 25 personnes venant de 12 pays ont proposé à l'assemblée générale de l'UIS un nouveau président et 2 vice présidents.
Ceux-ci sont Philippe Brunet France, Président, Antoine Comaty, Liban et Arjan Van Waadenburg Holland, Vice présidents.

En conformité avec les objectifs votés lors de l'assemblée générale de l'U.I.S, l'activité de la commission plongée souterraine de l'UIS s'est concentrée pour cette première mandature sur la **représentativité** de la commission afin d'aider les plongeurs souterrains lorsque leurs intérêts sont menacés.

Représentation

En février 2006, je me suis rendu au Mexique où j'ai rencontré les plongeurs spéléologues, méxicains, américains, canadien et tchèques œuvrant sur l'exploration des cénotes. Cette région du monde est considérée comme la plus riche en siphon avec près de 700 km de galeries noyées. Chaque année de nombreux explorateurs viennent pour découvrir de nouvelles galeries. Sur place, des équipes installées proposent à des touristes de pratiquer la plongée souterraine tant en « cavern diving » qu'en « cave diving ».

En 2006, à la demande, d'un plongeur scientifique de 1ere classe et moniteur 1 étoile CMAS de la Fédération russe de plongée, j'ai établis une attestation spécifiant justifiant qu'il avait montré en exploration, équipement de cavités et topographies les qualités et compétences nécessaires à l'obtention du diplôme d'Instructeur de plongée spéléologique CMAS.

En novembre 2007, j'ai été présent à l'assemblée générale de la fédération spéléologique Flamande à Oostende en tant qu'invité d'honneur. J'ai participé à la réunion de leur commission de plongée souterraine et fait une conférence sur les apports de la plongée souterraine à la spéléologie.

En février 2008, je suis retourné au Yucatan Mexique. Cette région est un laboratoire de ce que peut être la plongée souterraine intensive. Les plongées récréatives sont nombreuses, parallèlement, les explorations se poursuivent dans des zones où l'urbanisme se développe. Les découvertes des réseaux montrent que les rivières d'eau douce sont menacées par la construction des routes, villes et décharges. Nous avons travaillé avec des plongeurs membres d'une organisation de protection du karst Yucathèque sur cette problématique.

En septembre 2008, un voyage en Nouvelle Calédonie a permis de rencontrer des plongeurs japonais et du territoire. La bas la plongée souterraine est balbutiante et les difficultés viennent de l'absence de propriété claire du sol et donc des cavernes.

Liberté de pratique de la plongée souterraine

Une analyse des modes de pratiques au sein des différents pays membres montre des différences notables. En particulier sur la propriété des rivières souterraines, l'existence de brevets pour l'enseignement et/ou de brevet pour la pratique de la plongée souterraine. L'existence de brevets de pratique en plongée souterraine issus de la plongée sous marine devient particulièrement contraignante pour plusieurs pays d'Europe dont la Serbie ou la Grèce.
En aout 2008, une réunion de la commission plongée souterraine de l'UIS a eu lieu a l'occasion de Vercors 2008, congrès de la FSE et les problèmes d'exigences de brevets de pratiques par certains gouvernements pour leur ressortissant (Grèce) a été discuté.
En Grèce une des voies proposée est la création de spéléologie subaquatique. Cette spécialité clairement rattachée à la spéléologie ne serait pas concernée pas les brevets de plongée « classique ».

La France est également concernée par cette problématique depuis la publication imposant des brevets de pratique pour l'usage des mélanges suroxygénés et des ternaires en plongée souterraine. De fait, les spéléologues français ne pouvaient plus réaliser d'explorations longues et/ou profondes nécessitant ce type de mélange respiratoire. La création d'habilitation en plongée souterraine aux mélanges créée par l'Ecole Françaises de Plongée Souterraine de la Fédération Française de Spéléologie a été présentée.

Aujourd'hui, une réflexion est menée par la Fédération Française de Plongée Sous Marine pour étendre à la France les brevets de pratiques existant au sein de la CMAS. Ces brevets de pratiques sont calqués sur des pratiques d'agences de plongée commerciale américaine.

Ceci s'oppose à la décision de la commission plongée souterraine de l'UIS de ne pas établir de règle unique et de respecter la diversité de pratique dans le monde et les particularités locales. Nous devons poursuivre dans cette voie du respect et nous opposer à toute globalisation de la pratique de la plongée souterraine qui a terme représenterait un véritable danger pour la plongée en milieu restreint.

Formation

La diffusion des bonnes pratiques de plongée souterraine était l'un des axes choisis par la commission. Il avait été décidé de réaliser un stage de perfectionnement à la plongée souterraine en 2007 dans un pays européen. Le choix a été de le faire au Portugal. Malheureusement, il n'a pas été possible de concrétiser ce projet. Aussi, un autre stage de formation sous l'égide de l'UIS a été prévu en pré camps Vercors en aout 2008.
Malgré plusieurs demandes de plongeurs belge, hollandais, grec et allemand, œ stage a été reporté par manque de participants.

Le stage de perfectionnement a finalement eu lieu en mai 2009 en Ardèche, France avec la participation de 8 plongeurs dont des grecs, belge et hollandais. Ce stage fut une véritable

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réussite et a parfaitement répondu aux attentes des stagiaires. Le mélange de plusieurs nationalités et l'encadrement par des formateurs français a imposé de nombreuses contraintes mais s'est avéré très enrichissant. L'évaluation de fin de stage donne un avis général très satisfaisant.

Publication

En 2006 un petit film a été réalisé sur les plongée au Yucatan afin d e faire connaitre ces sites si particulier.

A la demande du secrétaire général de l'UIS rencontré à de nombreuses reprises de façon informelle, j'ai publié en juin 2008 dans le journal de l'UIS, un article sur la perception de conscience en plongée souterraine.

Une monographie a été publiée en avril 2008 sur les explorations de la grotte de saint marcel d'Ardèche en France qui avaient été primées au congrès UIS d'Athènes en 2005. Le caractère exceptionnel de cette exploration tant par la pluridisciplinarité des techniques utilisées, que par l'étude et la diffusion vers le grand public des résultats, lui ont fait décerner le prix Martel de Joly lors du congrès FSE d'aout 2008.

Axes pour la prochaine Olympiade

A l'occasion du congrès UIS 2009, la réunion de la commission prévue le premier jour, sera l'occasion de présenter une synthèse de la pratique de la plongée souterraine au sein des pays membres.

Les objectifs pour la prochaine olympiade, qui auront été définis seront présentés en assemblée plénière le dernier jour pour validation. Ils tourneront autours de la liberté de pratique et le libre échange des plongeurs UIS pour l'exploration.

Philippe Brunet
Président commission plongée souterraine UIS 2005-2009

News from delegates and member-countries

New discovery of lava tubes in syria

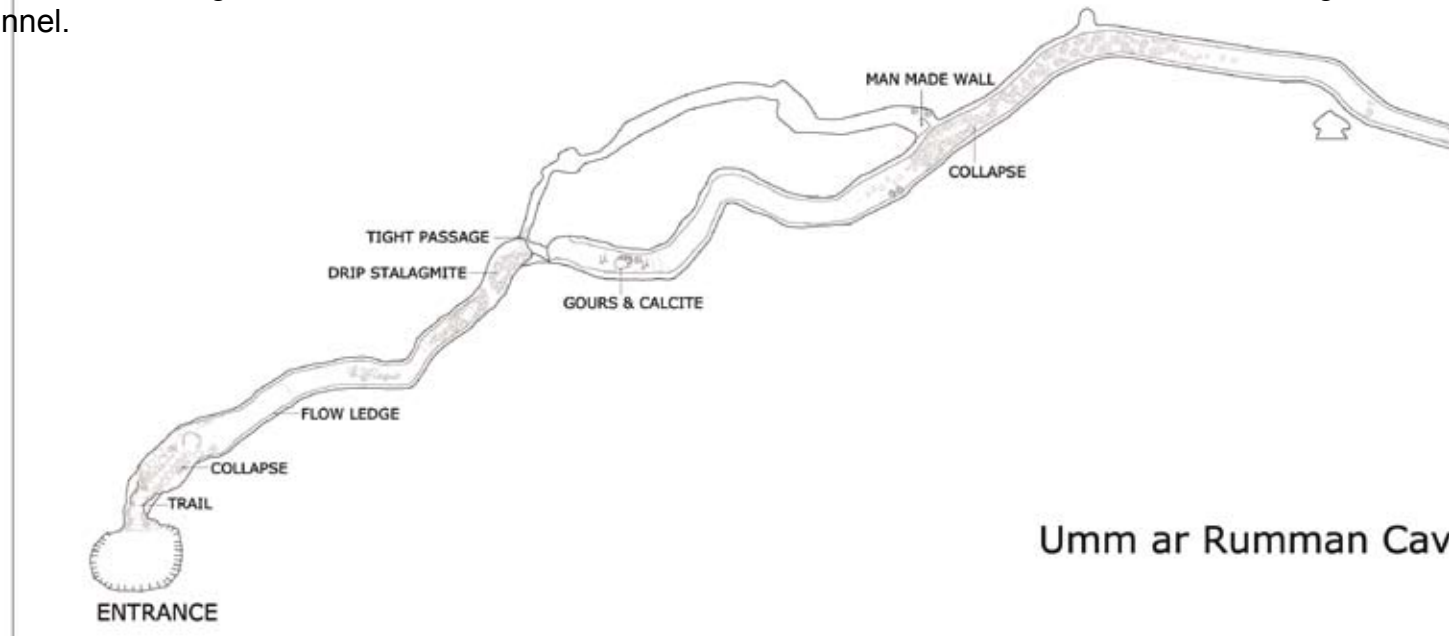
Johnny Tawk, Fadi Nader, Sami Karkabi and Waleed Jad (Spéléo-Club du Liban, P.O. Box: 70-923 Antelias, Lebanon

Since the beginning of 2008, the Spéléo-Club du Liban has been investigating volcanic caves in southern Syria. Two caves were explored and mapped, namely Umm ar Rumman and Aariqa. The first has a total surveyed development of 1615m, exceeding that of Umm Jirsan in Saudi Arabia which is considered to date the longest lava tube in Arabia.

Umm ar Rumman Cave

Umm ar Rumman cave is located south of As-Suwayda near the border with Jordan, and about 20km south-east Bosra city. This lava tube is located within the earliest Quaternary paehoehoe lava sheets (□1Q1) in a flat agricultural area. It is characterized by an entrance (14m deep and 20m wide) that may have been formed by roof-collapse. The entrance is cluttered with fallen rocks, a big opening leads through an inclined gallery 10m deep, to reach a linear gallery characterized by a well traced trail. The total development of Umm ar Rumman cave is 1615m (see map, below), and it contains braided galleries. As the longest reported lava tube in Arabia was the Umm Jirsan cave in Saudi Arabia with a development reaching 1481.2m (PINT, 2008; http://www.saudicaves.com/jirsan/index.htm),Umm ar Rumman becomes now the longest surveyed lava tube development in Middle East.

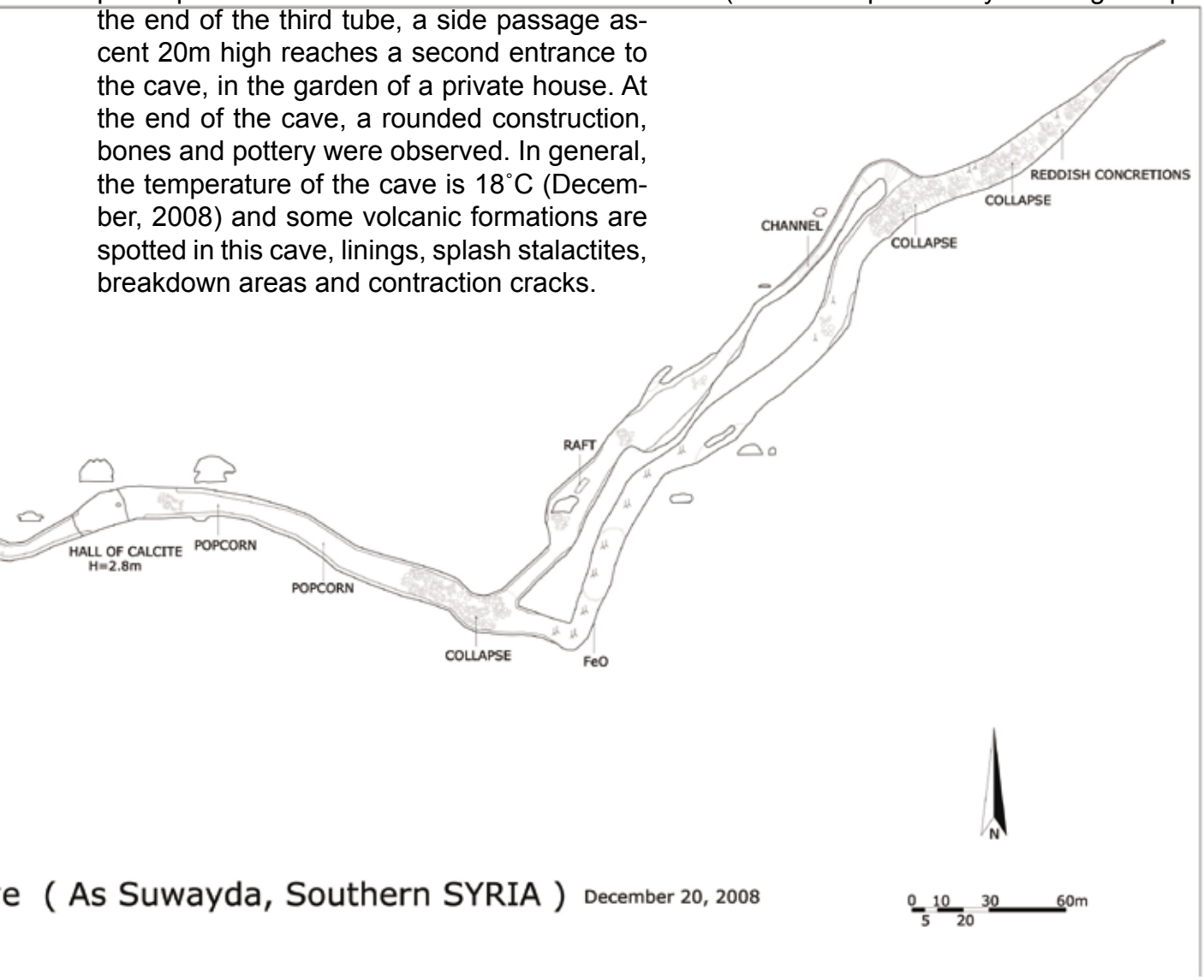
Umm ar Rumman is a typical lava cave hosting almost all features found in volcanic caves: levees and gutters, flow ledges, splash stalactites, lava columns and stalagmites, as well as rafts. In addition, beautiful calcite speleothems decorate this cave. The average diameter of the tube is 7.5m with a height of 8m. At 190m from the entrance, a huge collapse is located. A splash stalagmite is found, about 1m high, near a molded tree. The collapse ended with braided maize. After a small crawl, a second part began, calcite gours cover the floor where we found many fragments of pottery, after examination, they appeared to belong to the Islamic period (Ayyoubide or Mamlouk). At some places the roof could reach the height of 14m. At 800m from the entrance, a second braided maze is located, calcite speleothems are observed, (popcorn, stalagmites, helectites, among other calcite speleothems). At the end of the right sided tunnel, the cave's floor and walls became reddish with a big amount of fallen rocks. Umm ar Rumman cave ends with a narrow 10m long tunnel.



Aariqa Cave

The Aariqa cave is situated in the center of the Aariqa village. It was also called Ahiré cave and was used during different historical period in Syria. This cave is located northward of the Umm ar Rumman and within the relatively younger □5Q4 recent paehoehoe lavas which have been dated to about 4,000 years. The entrance is an impressive open collapse seen from the main road with average of 14m wide and 16.2m depth. At -14 m from the road, and at the left side, a basaltic stair under two arches goes down 5m towards Aariqa spring used for domestic purpose in the city. The total development of the cave is 562m.

The entrance of the cave is protected by a carved monolithic basaltic door from Nabatean or Roman era (64 B.C to 391 A.D) about 90cm wide and 110 cm high, no inscriptions are observed. After three steps, you could reach the first part of the cave which is an east-west 165m long tube. This part is developed as a show cave, electrical cables and projectors are seen on both sides. It is 16m large and 9m high with a flat muddy clay floor caused by dripping water from lateral sides. Scarce calcite stalactites are apparent. At the end of the tube, a large chunk of wall is fallen creating lining, the wall is glazed. Beyond this tube, the morphology of the cave takes different aspect followed with four smaller tubes linked by tight and low passages. The first tube is distinguish by an important rock collapse, on which we could map seven enclosures separated by non carved stone walls not further than 30cm high. At the interior of these enclosures reveal a fireplace, animal bones and fragments of pottery (Arab period, after 634 A.D.), this reveal a past human occupation. The second tube is 72m long, 13m large and 5m high. Here also, non carved stone structures are located on both sides of the floor, animal bones and pottery. This tube is at -12m from the touristic area. The third tube is as follows, with 40m long, 10m large and 5m high. This part represents the continuation of the second tube (which is separated by a ceiling collapse). At the end of the third tube, a side passage ascent 20m high reaches a second entrance to the cave, in the garden of a private house. At the end of the cave, a rounded construction, bones and pottery were observed. In general, the temperature of the cave is 18˚C (December, 2008) and some volcanic formations are spotted in this cave, linings, splash stalactites, breakdown areas and contraction cracks.



e (As Suwayda, Southern SYRIA) December 20, 2008

Speleology in South Africa

Stephen A. Craven, sacraven@mweb.co.za

The South African Spelaeological Association is, to the best of our knowledge, the only active caving organisation in sub-Saharan Africa. In the Cape we have one member club - the Cape Peninsula Spelaeological Society. In the north of the country there are three member clubs, the Cave Exploration, Rescue & Adventure Club in Middelburg, the Potch Potholers in Parys and the Speleological Exploration Club in Johannesburg.

In the Cape we have short caves in the insoluble Table Mountain Sandstone where there is currently new passage being found and surveyed - about 4 km. in one system which is not bad for sandstone. Further afield there are short caves in the coastal limestones of which the best known are on the De Hoop nature reserve east of Bradasdorp. In the Swartberg foothills north of Oudtshoorn there is a 30 km. outcrop of limestone with many caves and potholes, of which the best known is the Cango show cave.

In the north dolomite caves are found in the Northern Cape on the Ghaap Plateau between Kuruman, Vryburg and Campbell. These are so remote from the clubs' bases that very little is known about them. Nearer home caves are found in a thin crescentic area enclosing Klerksdorp, Krugersdorp and Pretoria, around Thabazimbi and Rooiberg, and between Potgeitersrus and Nelspruit. Compared with the Cape there is a larger population and more caves in the north around Johannesburg. Therefore the clubs are more active.

We welcome visitors, but must warn them that many of our caves contain fungal spores which cause histoplasmosis. Our experience of this disease in the Cape confirms that the disease is benign, and that the patients recover without treatment.

The best account of the speleological potential of South Africa, and of the rest of the continent, can be found in Michael Laumanns' splendid Atlas of the Great Caves and the Karst of Africa published in 2002 by the Spelaoclub Berlin.

New longest Cave of Gabon (Central Africa)

Michael Laumanns (Germany)

Since the year 2001 the author of these lines was lurking for an opportunity to visit the caves of Gabon as the “Atlas of the Great Caves and the Karst of Africa (just by surprise written by the same author…) indicates a wealth of interesting and nearly unexplored karst areas as well as several caves significant in length like Grotte de Kessipougou near Lastoursville at 1,550 metres (the longest cave of Gabon known so far). This cave name already shows that Gabon is a francophone country, which, in conjunction with an incredibly expensive travelling, made all planning for a trip very difficult. However, unpublished literature collected at the Musée Royale d’Afrique Centrale in Tervuren (Belgium) proved many caves around the city of Ndendé in southern Gabon and in early 2008 rumours became apparent that a US cave expedition would target Gabon in July/ August the same year. They were sponsored by National Geographic as well as by a NSS grant. Contact quickly was established and the team, consisting of Trevor, Matt Oliphant, Nancy Pistole, Dave Daversa and the author met at the American Missionary Hospital in Lébamba, a small town about 15 km NE of Ndendé where the base camp was erected and day-trips to the surrounding caves were made. Unfortunately, none of the Americans spoke French and the hired translator couldn’t make it in time to accompany permit negotiations with the local Préfet and villagers. With my rudimentary French, which is merely OK to order another beer after having had already a couple of other drinks before, everything was managed though… - and within the following two weeks 13 caves with a total of nearly 5.6 km of passages were surveyed.

These caves were indeed stunning: firstly they are formed in Upper Precambrian bedrock aged 2 billion years. Secondly, access to the caves is quite adventurous with demanding jungle hikes of several hours – it is sheer impossible to find the entrances without a really good guide. Thirdly, the biodiversity inside the caves is incredible. Very large bat roosts of several different bat species are abundant, some of them known to spread the Marburg virus.

By accident we were taken to the Grotte de Mbenaltembe – a cave that was already explored by French geologists around 1982 to approx. 700 metres and thus we were only prepared to pay it a quick visit and take a few nice photographs. Instead of that it quickly turned out that the cave was much longer with several other entrances and much passage in between to survey. Four days of mapping resulted in 2,380 m of passages with only minor open leads left, firmly establishing Grotte de Mbenaltembe as the new longest cave of Gabon. The cave is a rift-controlled system formed in thinly bedded limestone, which creates instable breakdown in places leading to a situation where one participant was trapped by rock-fall for some miserable hours until we were luckily able to get him out by use of our car jacks. It was definitely good to see this fellow going with us to the caves again two days later.

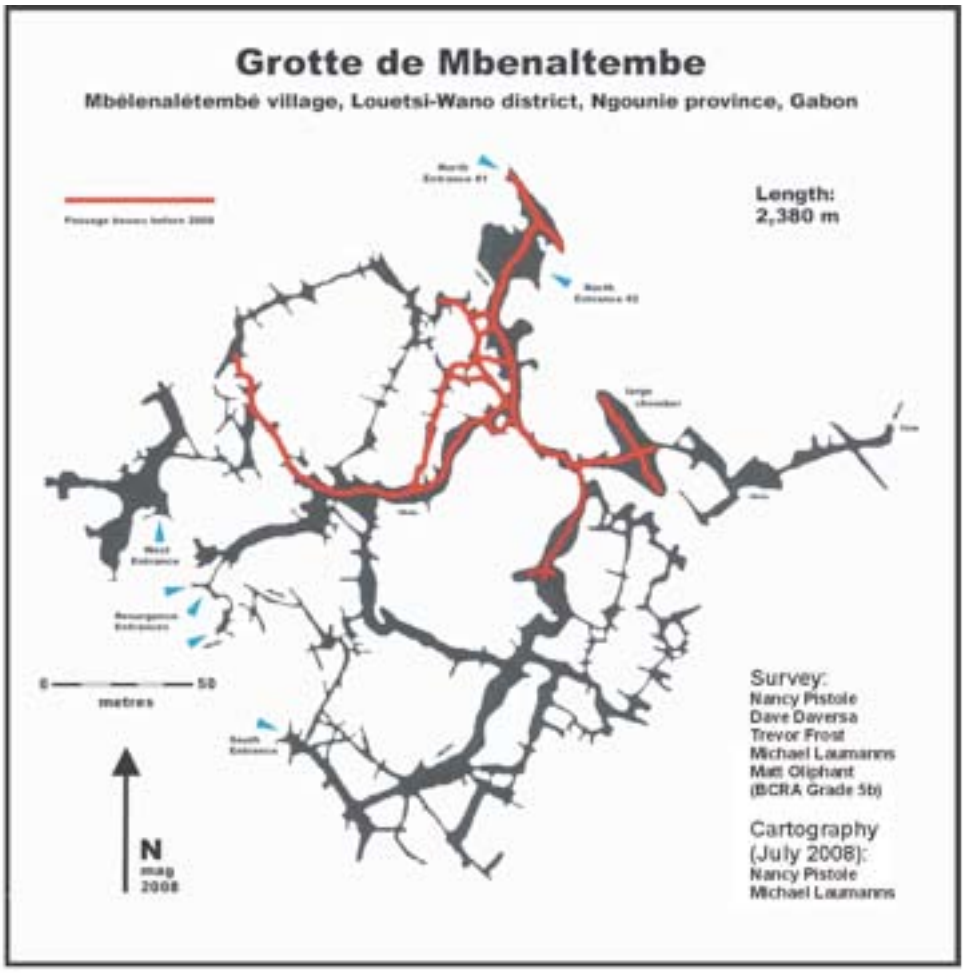
These caves included e.g. the Grotte de Nguedi Eduma. The Nyombo River enters the cave through a sinkhole entrance. There is a scenic roof collapse between the insurgence and the resurgence. Extensive labyrinths of rift-controlled passages occur east of the main river passage. Some of these also carry small amounts of water. Due to lack of time these cave sections were only partially mapped. Consequently, the surveyed length of 830 m is preliminary only. The total length easily exceeds 1 km.

Another very impressive cave is Grotte de Ndongou. The cave entrance is in a large doline in front of a limestone cliff that is hidden in a forest. The steep entrance section leads to a very large, flat-roofed main passage up to 50 m wide and 7 m high, which has been formed under phreatic conditions. This passage leads in NW direction and is blocked by a deep lake about 380 m from the entrance. This lake was not pushed during the expedition and the passage simply continues in the same size.

Needless to say that a detailed expedition report will soon be released in the “Berliner Höhlenkundliche Berichte” in English and French language.

There is much more work to do in the surroundings of Lébamba and in whole Gabon. Furthermore

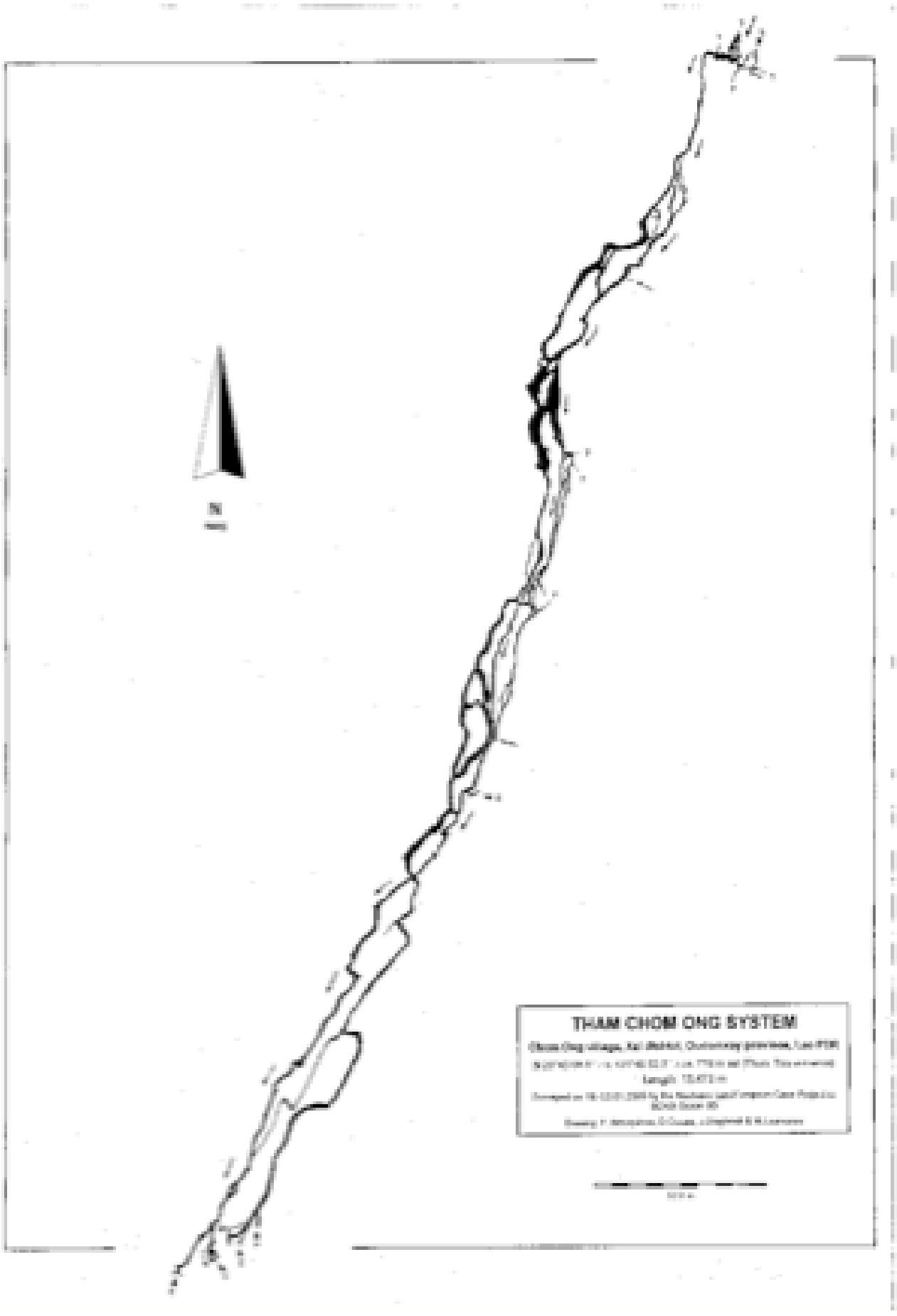
the country is wonderful with its extensive green forests and its mild equatorial climate. Who's going to sponsor the next cave investigations?!
michael.laumanns@bmf.bund.de



New longest cave of northern Laos

The Laos 2009 team is back from a very successful expedition to Oudomxay and Vieng Thong in Northern Laos. The most significant finding and major highlight since the expeditions started in 2002 is the exploration of the Ban Chom Ong System 25 km northwest of Oudomxay town.
The system stretches along a 4 km long mountain ridge and has a parallel running and interconnecting fossil and river passage. It was in just 5 days explored to a length of 13.5 km with several wide open side passages remaining. It ranks now as the second longest cave in Laos (longest cave Tham Nam Non in the Khammouane province, map unpublished though). The typical passage dimension is 20-25 m width and 20-30 m height. Two huge overlaying halls mark the connection of river and fossil passage with each 100 m length, 30 m width and ceiling heights of 30-50 m. The cave is a trough cave and can be entered near the stream inlet and left at the outflow. The full traverse takes 3.5 hours with additional 3 hours return walking time from Chom Ong village! The cave was pushed at the last day in a 15 hour trip to its current length.
The cave is currently developed as a cave for ecotourism. We received full support from the provincial tourism office in cooperation with Mr. Siegfried Moser from the German Development Service (DED) who covered all our expenses while staying in Chom Ong village. The director invited us during the farewell dinner to return again to Laos and promised an Oudomxay province cave entrance directory.
The visit of Vieng Thong yielded 3.7 further caving km with Tham Kokai as most remarkable. The 20 m wide and 1,125 m long passage is covered over hundreds of meters with dry sinter basins and sinter pearls of 2-5 cm diameter.

In total over 17 km of caves have been mapped during the 2 weeks.
The project will return again to Oudomxay in January 2010.
Northern Lao-European Cave Project (text supplied by Michael.laumanns@bmf.bund.de)



Les expéditions parrainées par la Fédération Française de Spéléologie en 2008

Olivier Vidal

Trente expéditions ont été parrainées en 2008. Deux expéditions ont été annulées, ce sont donc finalement 28 expéditions qui ont été effectivement réalisées. Nous sommes plutôt dans la moyenne de la fourchette des dix dernières années, alors que 2007 avait été une année exceptionnelle.

Ces expéditions se sont réparties dans 21 pays : sept expéditions dans cinq pays européens, neuf expéditions dans six pays asiatiques, dix expéditions dans sept pays des Amériques, trois expéditions dans deux pays d'Afrique et une expédition en Océanie (Nlle Calédonie). Quatre expéditions avaient pour but la plongée de siphons (n°01-2008, 13-2008, 14-2008 et 19-2008), ce qui est dans la moyenne des 10 dernières années. Et deux expéditions avaient pour but la descente de canyons (n°04-2008, 07-2008).

Au niveau des destinations, on constate que le retour à la moyenne du nombre des expéditions s'est faite au détriment des pays européens et notamment de la région des Balkans (seulement trois expéditions). Deux autres destinations garde la côte de part et d'autre du détroit de Gibraltar : Espagne et Maroc (cinq expéditions pour ces deux pays contre neuf l'an dernier néanmoins). La tendance forte en faveur des régions karstiques plus lointaines reste d'actualité. En particulier vers l'Amérique Centrale qui est la destination la plus représentée cette année (huit expéditions). Le continent asiatique se maintient à un niveau élevé, cette proportion d'expéditions lointaines a plus que doublé par rapport aux statistiques des années 80-90. Le continent africain revient à un niveau dans la moyenne des années précédentes avec les mêmes pays (Maroc et Madagascar). Il y a toujours aussi peu d'expéditions au Moyen-Orient puisqu'il n'y a aucune expédition cette année dans la région, des situations de refus d'autorisations d'explorer dans ces pays sont peut-être en partie responsables de cette évolution et bien entendu le contexte international tendu dans ces régions y est aussi sûrement pour beaucoup. Une niche certainement à explorer pour l'avenir, dans ces régions pourtant si proches …

Le nombre d'expéditions est revenu dans la moyenne et les résultats aussi. En fixant, comme d'habitude, la barre à 5 km de développement, à l'exploration de nouvelles cavités de plus de 500 m de profondeur ou à des découvertes importantes sur le plan archéologique, dix expéditions (soit près de 35% des expéditions) se retrouvent dans la liste des « résultats exceptionnels » (n°1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25-2008).

Tableau 1 : Récapitulatif des expéditions 2008

N°	Expédition	Pays	Région	Dates	Club	Subvention
1	Expédition Nationale FFS Ultima Patagonia 2008	CHILI	Patagonie	01/01/2008 - 10/03/2008	Centre Terre (A)	3000
2	Expé Spéléo Laos 2008	LAOS	District de Vang Vieng	01/02/2008- 09/03/2008	Spitteurs Pan	800

3	Guizhou 2008	CHINE	Guizhou	23/02/08-29/03/08	PSCJA (C)	900
4	France Vietnam Canyon	VIETNAM	Hauts plateaux Centre	17/02/2008-01/03/2008	USAN – (54)	500
5	Xe Bang Fai 2008	LAOS	Khammouane	17/02/2008-01/03/2008	SC Montpellier (34)	650
6	Cuevas Cubanas 2008	CUBA	Pinar del Rio	18/02/2008-03/03/2008	Clans des Tritons (69)	650
7	CANYON au Népal 2008	NEPAL	Bhote Khosi, Sun Khosi et Melanchi Khosi	18/01/2008-08/03/2008	Spéléo Club Caussenard	600
8	MEXPE 2008	MEXIQUE	Etat de Puebla	11/03/2008-12/04/2008	69	250
9	Guacaras Tainas	REP.DOMINICAINE	Elias Piña, Romana et Sanchez Ramirez	09/02/2008-16/03/2008	Troglodytes (69)	250
10	Planalto 2008	PORTUGAL	Algar Alécrineros	22/03/2008-29/03/2008	SSA Caussade (82)	350
11	Phuan Falang Gang 2008	LAOS	VANG-VIENG	23/03/2008-14/04/2008	EEGC (92)	550
12	Macédoine 2008	MACEDOINE	Makedowski Brod	02/08/2008-24/08/2008	ASBTP	350
13	Yucatan 2008	MEXIQUE	Yucatan	10/02/2008-27/02/2008	AVENS (94)	650
14	Lifou 2008	NOUVELLE CALEDONIE	Iles Loyauté	23/08/2008-16/09/2008	AVENS (94)	450
15	Cerro Rabon 2008	MEXIQUE	Oaxala	20/02/2008-20/03/2008	Tarn Né Tarnon (48)	500
16	Chixoy 2008	GUATEMALA	Alta Verapaz	10/02/2008-25/02/2008	CRESPE (06)	200
17	YUC 2008 B	MEXIQUE	Yucatan	14/05/08-03/06/08	SC de l'X (94)	700
18	Win Timdouine	MAROC	Haut-Atlas, région d'Agadir	10/07/2008-10/08/2008	Ass. Spéléo. De Figeac (46)	450
19	Sous le Movison 2008	ESPAGNE	Aragon	09/08/2008-17/08/2008	GS Languedoc (34)	450
20	Nanthai 2008	THAILANDE	Nan	13/07/2008-03/08/2008	SSAPO (09)	450
21	Ramalho 2008	BRESIL	Etat de Bahia	29/08/2008-24/09/2008	GS Bagnols Marcoule (30)	800
22	Levka-Ori 2008	GRECE	Crète	15/07/2008-15/08/2008	GS Catamaran (25)	500
23	Spéléologie au Pays de l'Homme Sauvage	CHINE	Sichuan - Hubei		AKL (C)	Annulée
24	Humpleu 2008	ROUMANIE	Mt Aposeni		SC d'Annecy (74)	Annulée
25	Malagzy 2008	MADAGASCAR	Namoroka	14/07/2008-04/08/2008	Drabons et Chieures (38)	450
26	Agui Sarlag	MONGOLIE	Altaï, Ulistaï, Boruun Urt	19/07/2008-20/08/2008	GS Scientifique et Sportif (24)	550
27	Costa Rica 2008	COSTA RICA	Puntarenas, karst de Fila Zapote	07/08/2008-26/08/2008	AKL (C)	650
28	Picos Padiorna 2008	ESPAGNE	Asturies	03/08/2008-17/08/2008	AS Charentaise (16)	450
30	Talassemtane 2008	MAROC	Rif	03/08/2008-24/08/2008	SC de Blois (41)	450
31	Porracolina 2008	ESPAGNE	Santander	avril, août et novembre	CAF Albertville (73)	450

Au total, les expéditions de l'année 2008 ramènent près de 132 km de topographie ce qui est un résultat extrêmement bon compte tenu du nombre moyen d'expéditions réalisées. 2008 est donc une bonne année en terme de résultats, puisqu'elle se situe une fois et demi au dessus de la moyenne qui tourne, bon an, mal an, autour de 90 km. Que 2009 soit riche en exploration !

Tableau 2 : Liste des comptes rendus d'expéditions reçus en 2008

N° expédition	**Nom de l'expédition :**	**Pays**
2-2005	Papou 2005	Papouasie
18-2005 ; 24-2006 ; 30-2007	Porracolina	Espagne
23/2005	Lavasar 2005	Espagne
18/2006	Malagasy 2006	Madagascar
3-2007	Krapa 2007	Macédoine
4/2007	Canyon au Népal 2007	Népal
14-2007	Bornéo 2007	Indonésie
15-2007	Baticellas 2007	Espagne
23/2007	Levka-Ori 2007	Grèce
25-2007	Expédition Roumanie 2007 « Infinit de Apa »	Roumanie
28/2007	Expédition Portugal 2007	Portugal
29/2007	Taurus Occidental 2007	Turquie
32/2007	Picos Padiorna 2007	Espagne
16-2008	Chixoy 2008	Guatemala
N° 13/2005	Selamat Goa 2005	Indonésie
N° 16/2006 et 31/2007	Chaquil 2006 – Santiago 2007	Pérou
N° 7/2007	Bamba 2007	Pérou
N° 11/2007	Descoberto 2007	Brésil
° 34/2007	Vega Huerta 2007	Espagne
N° 35/2007	Tsingy 2007	Madagascar

Società Speleologica Italiana

Italian International Activities

Riccardo Dall'Acqua (*)

Italian activities and presences for the Kerville International Congress of Speleology:
For the Italian Speleological Society (SSI) prof. Paolo Forti and prof. Jo De Waele will introduce the "Power Point Project", an educational series of 46 visual presentation about Italian karts, history, cave technique and all about speleology. All the Power Point project results will be made available on DVD (printed with the National Cave and Karst Research Institute contribute).

The SSI Commission for Artificial Caving will present the "Map of Ancient Underground Aqueducts", a nationwide project conducted by M. Parise, R. Bixio, E. Burri, V. Caloi, S. Del Prete, C. Galeazzi, C. Germani, P. Guglia, M. Meneghini and M. Sammarco. The project will be soon on the Internet and the coordination team will invite the international colleagues to collaborate for the creation of a worldwide bibliography about ancient Aqueducts.

The Artificial Caving Commission magazine "Opera Ipogea" is now on the tenth year with a renewed editorial staff. Contibutions in English will be accepted from the next issues.

The publications maniacs can find the last issues of "The International Journal of Speleology" (the Italian Speleological Institute magazine), "Memorie dell'Istituto Italiano di Speleologia", "Opera Ipogea"," Speleologia" and the "Toscana Underground guide" at the "Speleo Project" stand

* Riccardo Dall'Acqua. Member of International Relationships Committee of the Italian Speleological Society.

CRECIMIENTO LENTO PERO CUALITATIVO DE LA ESPELEOLOGIA LATINOAMERICANA

CARLOS BENEDETTO - SECRETARIO ADJUNTO UIS - ARGENTINA

Abstract

Latin America Speleology continues to develop with increasing interconnectedness between countries regardless of political structures speleological supra. Increasingly come into the foreground the technical, scientific and legal. Acquires particular importance in an increasing number of countries whether or not there are specific laws speleological or applications where there is. There is increasing technical cooperation among Latin American countries where the Speleology not growing, both quantitatively and qualitatively

Legislación espeleológica en Sudamérica

En los temas relacionados con la legislación espeleológica, hay países de la región donde se mantiene un estado de estancamiento o indiferencia del problema, en otros se experimentan progresos, mientras que en Brasil la situación es todavía muy preocupante.

Muy poco es lo que se avanzó positivamente en el problema de los cambios en la legislación espeleológica brasileña, según lo que relatáramos en nuestro UIS Bulletin de hace seis meses.

Las reformas legales ponen en peligro a alrededor de 5.000 cavernas en todo el país a partir de la "flexibilización" de leyes ambientales hasta hace poco muy severas, por el avance de proyectos económicos (especialmente mineros) de gran envergadura.

En esto último, las preocupaciones de los espeleólogos brasileños se vincularon con la militancia ambiental general. En Argentina también está ocurriendo eso, y así la Espeleología se acercó a posturas de defensa de los glaciares de la Cordillera como problema que también afecta real o potencialmente al patrimonio espeleológico. En Paraguay se apunta a desarrollar el espeleoturismo como alternativa a la minería sin control en el norte del país y a que se aprueben leyes de protección de las cavernas.

El caso de Brasil es muy interesante porque el debate acerca de la desprotección creciente de las cavidades naturales se basa en cuestiones doctrinarias profundas.

Por un lado el gobierno federal, que apoya los emprendimientos económicos y por lo tanto la flexibilización de las leyes ambientales, estableció un criterio de clasificación de las cavernas, según el cual hay cavernas que son "relevantes" y otras que no lo son. Pero los investigadores y espeleólogos acusan al gobierno de no establecer criterios claros de tal "relevancia".

Algunos diputados brasileños comprendieron que las modificaciones a las leyes constituyen un "retroceso", porque el 70% de las cavernas brasileñas podrían sufrir impactos graves por parte de la actividad económica. Pero los funcionarios del gobierno sostienen que la clasificación que propician es "histórica" porque se establece la importancia histórica, cultural y ambiental de las cavernas. El debate continúa y la preocupación crece.

Paraguay y Argentina

La naciente espeleología paraguaya propone el desarrollo del espeleoturismo como alternativa a las actividades mineras no controladas, pero también al desmonte descontrolado de bosques cuya madera es usada para alimentar los hornos mineros, mientras que paralelamente han propuesto al Congreso Nacional un proyecto de ley para dar marco regulatorio a todo ésto.

En el primer semestre de este año las Federaciones espeleológicas de ambos países han trabajado juntas en la redacción del proyecto de ley paraguaya y en reclamar a los políticos que deben aprobarlas y vuelven a organizar ahora nuevas expediciones conjuntas para asegurar la presencia física de espeleólogos interesados en que las cavernas sean protegidas.

Espeleólogos paraguayos y argentinos en cuevas del norte de Paraguay

En el caso de la Argentina no hubo mucho interés de parte de los legisladores nacionales en el dictado de una ley nacional de Espeleología, pero tampoco hubo mucha insistencia por parte de los propios espeleólogos, ya que el sistema federal argentino otorga poderes de policía ambiental a los estados provinciales por encima del estado nacional y es allí donde se centralizan entonces las tareas políticas de los espeleólogos.

De hecho sólo dos provincias, Neuquén y Mendoza, tienen leyes específicas espeleológicas, como asimismo son las únicas provincias donde hay áreas naturales protegidas específicamente espeleológicas (Sistema Cavernario Cuchillo Cura y Caverna de Las Brujas, respectivamente).

Las dos provincias contienen el 50% de las cavernas exploradas en todo el país, incluyendo cavidades kársticas en caliza y yeso, como asimismo "lava tubes", no solamente las cavernas mencionadas protegidas por ley.

En la primera de esas provincias rige, desde hace años, la prohibición de practicar la espeleología, por una incorrecta aplicación de la ley provincial 2213 y eso ha paralizado la acción de

exploración y por lo tanto también la protección.

Esto ha sido motivo en 2008 de un reclamo por parte de la propia UIS a través de sus delegados argentinos y a través de la Comisión de la Protección. Ya empiezan a verse los resultados de esos reclamos: la federación nacional de Espeleología ha obtenido, en la primera mitad de este año, sustraerse a la lógica política de la relación entre gobierno y "grupos" espeleológicos, obteniendo permisos para que las cavernas de Cuchillo Cura sean visitadas por misiones científicas y al menos este año se prevee, desde comienzos de julio, el inicio de actividades en dos especialidades: 1) la reconstrucción paleoclimática en estalagmitas a cargo de investigadores de la Universidad de Georgia (USA), de la Academia China de Ciencias y del instituto Argentino de Nivología y Glaciología (IANIGLA), todos ellos asesores de las asociaciones de espeleología; 2) la continuación del relevamiento bioespeleológico interrumpido hace años en el Sistema Cavernario Cuchillo Cura, incluyendo el aporte del PCMA (Programa de Conservación de los Murciélagos de Argentina), al cual nos referimos en nuestro número anterior del UIS Bulletin.

Espeleólogos e investigadores de las Universidades de Georgia y Colorado (USA) y Buenos Aires, en Caverna de Las Brujas

En Mendoza la ley de cavidades naturales es anterior a la de Neuquén, pero no se aplicaba de manera concreta y sostenida. A mediados del año 2008 la Secretaría de Medio Ambiente provincial lanzó un Plan de Gestión Ambiental 2008-2012 que incluye 67 programas relacionados con la protección del ambiente.

Uno de esos programas es el PPE - Programa Provincial de Espeleología, cuyo diseño fue confiado a los mismos espeleólogos y que tenía como fecha de lanzamiento original (postergado por razones burocráticas) el 1º de julio de 2009, al cumplirse 150 años del nacimiento de Edouard Martel.

De hecho, el lanzamiento coincidirá con la inauguración de una biblioteca espeleológica que llevará el nombre del fundador de la Espeleología en Francia y el mundo, lo que indica que Gobierno y espeleólogos han acercado sus posiciones antes antagónicas.

Desde esa plataforma, se proyecta el desarrollo de la espeleología argentina

en el Noroeste Argentino a partir de un proyecto educativo conjunto de los espeleólogos con el PCMA y con bioespeleólogos de Bolivia y de Paraguay, en octubre de 2009.

En Centroamérica también hay una tendencia a trabajar juntos

La Espeleología Centroamericana se ha desarrollado en silencio, pero con pasos firmes, en el camino de la integración regional, y así encontramos en proyectos conjuntos a espeleólogos e investigadores de Costa Rica, Panamá, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador y Belize. Incluso han esbozado el proyecto de conformar una Federación Centroamericana.

El país propiciante por excelencia fue Costa Rica a través de su grupo GEA – Anthros, y en 2006 ya llevaron a cabo un primer Congreso, cuya segunda edición tendrá lugar en 2011.

Más importante aún es la formación del ICEKE – Instituto Centro Americano de Estudios del Karst y espeleoleogía, proyecto que se define a sí mismo como "una red de organizaciones centroamericanas que se dedican al estudio y la protección del mundo subterráneo y del karst". Su misión es "fomentar el estudio de todos los aspectos del mundo subterráneo y del karst como parte de nuestras culturas y territorios".

Espeleólogos centroamericanos del proyecto pro ICEKE

En el marco del ICEKE se está trabajando en un proyecto educativo "on line", que ofrezca la posibilidad a muchas personas de conocer los ambientes naturales subterráneos, en los aspectos de gestión y protección, y así promover en los ámbitos laborales la cultura de protección de estos patrimonios comunes. El proyecto se llama EDUKARST, es abierto, y en el mismo ya pidió participar la Escuela Argentina de Espeleología (EAE), que desarrolla parte de sus actividades en convenio con la Escuela Española de Espeleología.

En el mismo proyecto se destaca la actividad de ASOKARST - Organización para la Protección del Karst en Guatemala creada en 2003 y con reconocimiento legal desde 2004, cuya principal finalidad es "agrupar a profesionales de distintas ramas para enfocarse en la realización de proyectos destinados al desarrollo y conservación de áreas kársticas". La idea surgió en julio del 2003, cuando se llevó a cabo en el Centro Universitario del Norte (CUNOR-USAC) el I Seminario Internacional sobre manejo sostenible de terrenos kársticos, el cual contó con la participación de comunidades del municipio de Chisec, expositores de la Universidad de San Carlos, Universidad Estatal de Idaho y el Grupo Antros de Costa Rica, según nos lo relata la geóloga Nancy Mollinedo a cargo de la Asociación.

Asokarst participó en honduras del I Congreso Centroamericano y se proyecta como "ente regulador de las exploraciones que se realizan en áreas kársticas puesto que tiene la capacidad de realizar los estudios técnicos que corresponden antes de abrir un sitio al turismo, para que éste no sea dañado por un manejo inadecuado".

Por su parte, la Asociación OZTOT (EL Salvador) que forma parte de este proyecto regional, pone el acento en los trabajos de antropología de cuevas, "considerando los ambientes hipogeos como geo-ecosistemas y espacios socio-culturales".

En todos los casos, es llamativo saber que hay grupos de espeleología que han crecido en silencio y también en silencio han buscado integrarse a otros de países vecinos, por lo que la conformación de una futura Federación Centroamericana será producto de la natural evolución de este proceso.

Las Escuelas española y argentina de Espeleología en un curso en la Cordillera de los Andes

News from Central America
The project ICEKE: Central American Institute of Karst & Speleological Studies
By Gustavo Quesada and Ferdinando Didonna

The Central American region has a great historical and environmental heritage: its caves, its underground environments, its karst territories and the ancestral use of the caves for religious rituals. At the present time, there isn't a regional institution that handles exploration, recording and protecting this natural heritage, of great importance for future generations. The idea of a Regional and transversal Institute took force during the First Seminar on Sustainable Management of karsts Land, held in Cobán, Guatemala, from June 16 to 19, 2003. On this occasion a declaration of attempts was signed, in which it was recognized the importance of the study of the karst systems, in relation to the sustainable development of the communities of those areas. It was at the 1st Central American Congress of Speleology in 2006, at Talgua, Honduras, where the caving groups of Central America, as well as those of the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico consolidated their interests of joining the project. ICEKE was established as a network that supports the first steps, which consisted of standardizing all karst records, plus the centralization of a database for Central America.

Country	Organization	Contacts
Panama	Smith. Trop. Res. Inst NSS	Keith Christenson
Costa Rica	Grupo Espeleológico ANTHROS GEA	Gustavo Quesada
Nicaragua	Not defined	Pending
Honduras	Unión Espeleológica de Honduras UEH	Jorge Yanez
El Salvador	Grupo Espeleológico Oztot	Liuba Moran
Guatemala	ASOKARST, Universidad de San Carlos Guatemala INGUAT	Nancy Mollinedo Lucrecia Gordillo
Belize	Not defined	Pending
Dominican Republic	Espeleo Grupo Santo Domingo	Domingo Abreu
USA	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	Mick J Day

Project ICEKE's mission is to be a scientific institution that is responsible for investigating and protecting karsts areas and the subterranean environment in Central America, in order to promote sustainable management of these natural environments as well as develop Central American caving as a multidisciplinary science.

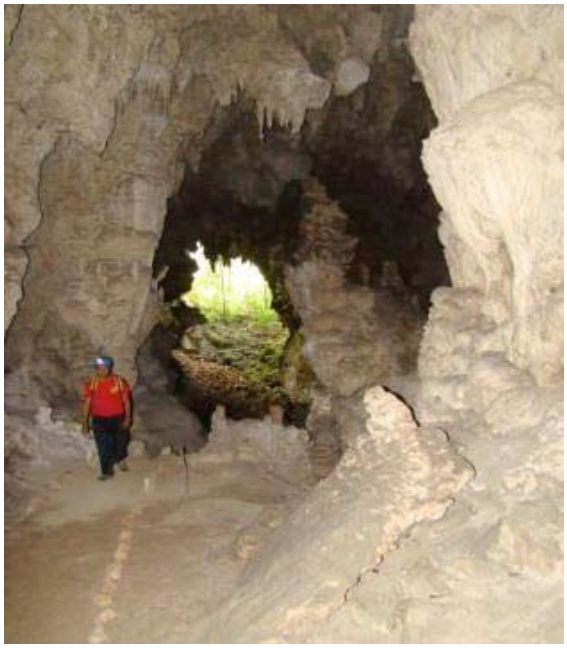
One of the actions of ICEKE is the cave register for our region, currently; there are a total of 574 caves recorded in Central America, which are detailed in the following table, by country (Under SpeleoBase specifications).

Country	Number of Caves	Longest Cave	Deepest Cave
Belize	74	Chiquibul System*(97 Km)	Actún Box Ch'iich' Cave (-183 m)
Costa Rica	256	La Bruja-Rectángulo-Corredores System (6 Km)	La Serpiente Dormida Cave (-169 m)
El Salvador	19	Caverna Encanto (121 m)	Caverna Encanto (-15 m)
Guatemala	27	K'an Ba Cave (3 Km)	Sacmoc Cave (-70 m)
Honduras	125	Quebrada de Susmay Cave (6.7 Km)	Sumidero de Maigual (-430 m) *
Nicaragua	5	Cueva de Murciélago (150 m)	Cueva del Murciélago (-17 m)
Panama	47	Ol' Bank Underworld (1.146 m)	Hueco de los Duendes (-22 m)
Update by Carlos Goicoechea Carranza June 2009, Source: Cave Register ICEKE			

This register is organized using the software SpeleoBase, freeware software from the Belgian speleologist Paul De Bie. ICEKE and the Grupo Espeleologico Anthros GEA from Costa Rica have carried on a translation of the software into Spanish to facilitate the use and impulse a standardized registry activity in Latin America.
In this sense ICEKE through GEA and ASOKARST, supported by the Japan cooperation JICA and the INGUAT (National Institute for Tourism in Guatemala), have recently held in Guatemala a workshop on cave register using SpeleoBase. This activity, realized in Cobán, is part of a joint study on cave open to tourism in Guatemala (Alta y Baja Verapaz, Petén), conducted by ICEKE and the above mentioned organization. The study is one first step to promote cave protection in this country as well as define the principals' risk in this activity both for the caves and for the tourists.

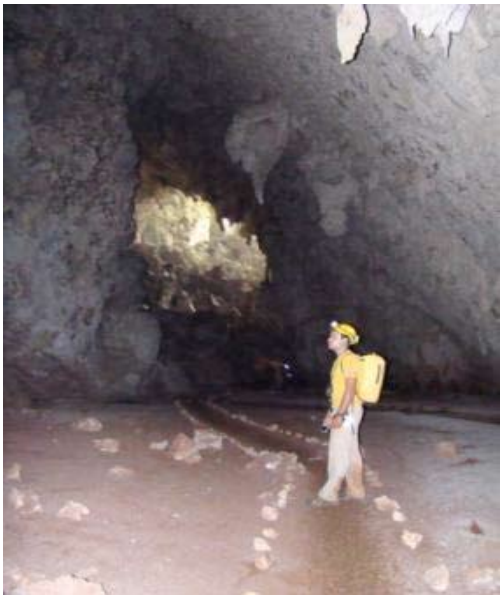
Introduction about karst of Guatemala held by Nancy Mollinedo ASOKARST in the workshop Speleobase

This study contribute to define policy and action for the national government as well as for the local organizations and it has been held with a wide participation of the formal an informal sector related to show caves.



Candelaria cave entrance in the second chamber. Photo Helene Schleehauf

Nice formation in Replica Cave used to replicate original drawings of Naj Tunich Cave. Photo Gustavo Quesada



Path in the last section of Candelaria Cave. Photo Helene Schleehauf

Broken formations at Naj Tunich Cave. Photo Gustavo Quesada

In order to promote speleology and cave protection in this country, the network of ICEKE has also decided to celebrate the II Central American Congress of Speleology in the city of Cobán, Guatemala in 2011, from the 18 to the 24th of April.

Actually the project ICEKE has received support from the Chair of IUCN Task Force on Caves and Karst and has expanded the involvement of public institution from Central America becoming an active point for cave and karts protection in the region. The network has also started the preparation of EduKarst, an on line educational program for cave and karst management and protection.

Speleology in Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador:

Costa Rica

In Costa Rica Speleology is well organized and actually the GEA is promoting an educational program ongoing from the year 2000, this program has two level speleological course and since 2006 one course of Advanced Cave Rescue, where for 8 days were carried out intensive simulated rescue operations in vertical caves with many advanced level obstacles. Additionally, Self-rescue techniques were implemented for small exploration teams. This course involved the participation of members of the Anthros Rescue Unit and international students from the United States and Canada.

Also GEA is responsible of the national cave register, a periodical publication EICR an a web site (www.anthros.org). In Costa Rica exist also a mountain sports federation FECODEM and the GEA is leading conduct on out exploration in Costa Rica and in the region promoting cooperation between groups and new speleologist.

Honduras

In Honduras the Speleological Union of Honduras UEH is growing and organizing more activities such as courses, exploration and support to the regional speleology. Still there is not a national register active nevertheless ICEKE through the GEA maintain a regional one. Many international groups have conducted different studies and during the Congress of Talgua many information was presented;
See : http://www.anthros.org/descargas/Memoria_1erCongresoCA_Speleo.pdf
Actually on May 2nd 2009 the UEH had an assembly to reelect a new board of directors and now the new members are:
Cynthia Zepeda President
Aquiles Moya Vice-President
Sonia León Hernández Secretary
Leonardo Raudalez Treasurer
Leonel García Prosecutor
They are working to obtain the legal status, also preparing a basic course of caving for August, managing another course of rescue with the Latin American School of Speleorescue of the FEALC. They have been making some explorations in the Aguilares well of Old Cattle ranch, another one more in Jamasquire, where were found some pieces broken of mud ceramics.

Guatemala

This country presents karst in an important area (approximately 15.000 km^2), and the most extensive karst is in the northeastern department of Petén but the speleological activity is still not well organized and the group ASOKARST (founded in 2003) is not yet structured, also there in no national cave register and few educational activity is carried on.
On the other side the country has the largest number of cave open to tourism in Central America and an ancestral relationship with the underground world , that now day is reactivated putting the cave under a special situation of attention and human pressure.

El Salvador

El Salvador has a small group named Oztot, which was created subsequently of a joint activity of the GEA and the National Museum of Anthropology MUNA in 2006. This group has realized small exploration in the country and a special workshop on karst protection for rural population held in two edition in 2006 and 2007 in the Metapan area.

Proyecto ICEKE
www.proiceke.blogspot.com

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GHAR BATON CAVE (IRAN):
National Speleological Activities after the International Speleological Expedition to Iran (ISEI 2008).
Report by: *Saeed Hasheminezhad*

Dr. George Veni (President of the 15th International Congress of Speleology): *"It is not the size of a congress that makes it great, but the quality of the people, the information they exchange, the ideas they create, and friendships that they grow. I've heard many good things about what cavers are doing in Iran, and I have no doubt you will have a great (even if small) congress."*

After the first successful reunion of Iranian cavers during ISEI 2008, the second reunion of Iranian cavers was held between February 24 and 27, 2009, in Mashad-Ghar Baton with the effort of Alpine Club of Iran and some previous members of ISEI from the city of Mashad. We can not also ignore the support and contribution of Damavand club, Sunland Tours, Hamatanb.com and Sarayan Red Cross.

Ghar Baton as the longest and deepest eastern cave of Iran. It is located in Charmeh Village, Sarayan in Southern Khorasan Province. It is an 8 hour drive from Mashad City. The first discovery and exploration of this cave was by Azadegan Club in 1990 and the second stage of discoveries in this cave, the second entrance and especially the technical parts, was accomplished by *Reza Khoshdel* a caver from Mashad in 2002.

Tuesday, Feb 24
After the gathering of all participants from seven provinces of Iran in Mahsad, a minibus and two other cars set off to Charmeh Village.
At night the team settled in Pir Abazar, a holy shrine in the middle of mountains which is situated about 6 kilometers from Charmeh Village. The biggest entrance of cave is about 1 hour hike from the shrine. That night the executive committee decided to divide the teams into three groups. A group to work on the technical part with SRT techniques and training, another group to make a map of the cave with the new methods taught during ISEI 2008 and training new members, and a group of beginners to work with *Javad Nezamdoost* with the basics of caving. Also it was decided to have a theoretical class in the morning of the next day as a review for previous ISEI members and introduction for new members.

Wednesday, Feb 25
In the morning two classes were held. The first class by *Saeed Hasheminezhad* was an introduction about caving gear and how to set them in order to achieve the best performance in the cave. The second class by *Yousef Vaghef* was about the basics of mapping and mapping gear in caves. Also an ambulance with two rescue workers from Sarayan Red Cross joined the team and stayed in the area until the end of program.
The mapping leaflet prepared by *Neven Bocic* and translated by *Sarah Edalatian* into Persian, was given to the members too.
After the classes the team set off to cave and started its pre-decided program. The SRT team (Kazem Faridyan, Saeed Hasheminezhad, Mehdi Jahangiri, Hossein Faraji, Mojtaba Rahbarkhah,

Vahid Ashrafi, Morteza Gholampour, Ebrahim Beiramiyan) at first entered the biggest entrance and did every safety requirements for mapping team. Then the SRT team left the biggest entrance to upper entrance to make it ready for mapping team for the following day. However, because of the instability of the pits and loose hanging stones they changed their mind and considering safety as the main objective, they just abseiled the pits and joined the mapping team at 10 p.m. and informed them about the possible danger and postponing the mapping of upper part to another proper time.
The mapping team was also divided into two teams(1st team: Yousef Vaghef, Mitra Masoomi, Hamid Safarzadeh, Mehdi Lagzian, 2nd team: Sarah Edalatian, Fatemeh Vaghef, Mehrdad Hajihashemi, Amir Jelvani, Rahman Abbaspour) to map different branches and teach the new members. The topo team provided maps of the lower part of cave in plan, profile and cross section views.
That night all the team members stayed in the cave to experience a night in the cave in a flat gallery. It was a cold experience for the members!

Thursday, Feb 26
In the morning a group of topo team and SRT went to upper entrance to practice SRT in the first safe pit and gather the left SRT gear from the previous day. Then at noon all teams started leaving the cave to Pir Abazar shrine and then went back to Mashad.
At night we stayed at a Villa and watched some movies like: Amazing Caves and two other movies by Reza Nezamdoost.

Friday, Feb 27
After breakfast there was a gathering about the suggestions and critics about the program and future decisions, and then a PowerPoint show was presented by *Sarah Edalatian* about the importance and genesis of caves, karst and morphology of caves.
After that we had some guests like *Mr.Mazhabi*, Red Cross Chairman in Mashad, *Mr.Amani*, Secretary of Mashad Mountaineering club and …
It was also decided to hold the next gathering in Tabriz_west of Iran.
In the afternoon the gathering ended and our friends happily and pleased left Mashad to their cities.
All the activities were documented and filmed by *Hossein Faraji* and a short part of the gathering was also shown on Khorasan Channel on March 17 on sports show. Also *Afshin Yousefi* did a great job of photography in the cave.

Participants:
Javad Nezamdoost(Leader), *Saeed Hasheminezhad*(deputy Leader),*Hossein Faraji, Sarah Edalatian, Mehdi Jahangiri, Hamid Safarzadeh, Mojtaba Rahbarkhah, Morteza Gholampour, Mehdi Lagzian, Mohammad Khorshidi, Vahid Ashrafi, Majid Ghazi, Mehdi Amidi and Leila Mohazab*(Khorasan)
Kazem Faridyan, Afshin Yousefi, Yousef Vaghef, Fatemeh Vaghef (Tehran)
Mehrdad Hajihashemi, Amir Jelvani (Esfehan)
Ebrahim Beiramiyan, Rahman Abbaspour (East Azarbayjan)
Mehdi Abbasvand (West Azarbayjan)
Mitra Masoomi (Ghazvin)
Parasto Najm Soheili (Lorestan)

Here we should also acknowledge the contribution and support of *Mr.Mazhabi, Ghorban Ramezanpour, Hamid Nezamdoost, Amir Zarrin, Reza Khoshadel, Reza Ghasemi and Mr.Aryanezhad*

Photo 1. Baton cave entrance.


Photo 2. Iranian cavers, members of the Baton cave expedition at the entrance.

Iran, Baton cave expedition , photo: afshin yousefi

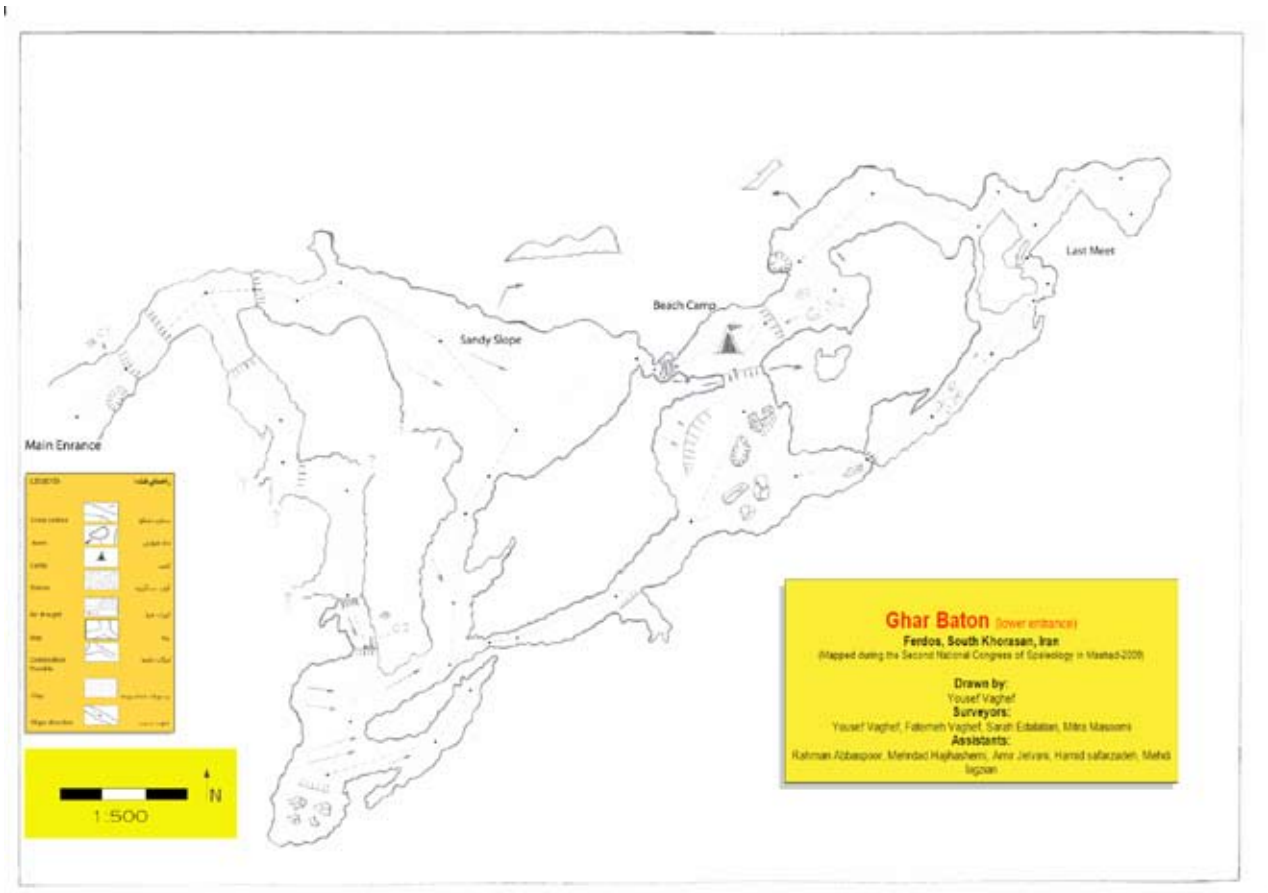
Photo 3. Exploration (Photo by Afshin Yousefi).

Iran, Baton cave, first shaft in upper entrance, 14m , photo: afshin yousefi

Photo 4. Training for rigging and SRT technique (Photo by Afshin Yousefi).

Iran, Baton cave, mapping team. photo: afshin yousefi

Photo 5. Cave mapping (Photo by Afshin Yousefi).



Ghar Baton cave map achieved by the Iranian cavers (see legend for details).

« Los Haitises » : A unique place on Earth !

Los Haitises: un lugar único en el Planeta

Los Haitises es un área única en el Planeta que se encuentra localizado en entre las Provincias de Monte Plata, Hato Mayor a una altitud de 0–287 metros y posee 63,416 ha. Es una de las zonas más lluviosas del país, con una precipitación anual de alrededor de 2,000 milímetros. Por la diversidad de zonas de vida, es considerado un sitio "complejo". Está conformado por *Bosque Muy húmedo* y *Húmedo Tropical*, *Bosque de Mangles, Zonas Húmedas, Formaciones de Roca Karst* (de roca caliza) y *Línea Costera*. También se encuentra *Bosque Secundario, Cavernas* o *Cuevas, Zonas Cultivadas, Jardines Rurales* y *Áreas Urbanas.* Existen *Mogotes* o pequeñas colinas. Se considera una de las zonas más ricas de la región en vegetación, tanto es así que muchas especies todavía no han sido catalogadas. Posee un vasto sistema de cavernas con pictografías (escrituras) y petroglifos (grabados en piedra).

Múltiples estudios realizados por organismos nacionales e internacionales han identificado el Karst de los Haitises como la **segunda reserva de agua más importante de nuestra isla**. La propia Secretaría de Estado de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales ha publicado que en la periferia de la zona kárstica de Los Haitises tienen su origen más de ciento cuarenta y siete (147) arroyos y caños permanentes, de los cuales noventa (90) fluyen hacia la cuenca del Río Ozama. Los ríos Ara, Comate, Comatillo, Sabita, Boyá, Yani, Piedra, Yabacao, Cevicos, Payabo y Brujuelas reciben aportes de agua de treinta y ocho (38) arroyos y manantiales de Los Haitises y que existen, además, unas veintiocho (28) lagunas con agua permanente.

La importancia de Los Haitises es tal, que ha sido clasificado por BirdLife International, el Grupo Jaragua, la Sociedad Ornitológica de la Hispanota, entre otras instituciones nacionales, como un **Area Importante para la Conservación de las Aves** (IBA, por sus siglas en Inglés). Este ecosistema es el último refugio de especies endémicas y en peligro, entre las que se encuentra el gavilán de Los Haitises, considerada globalmente amenazada. Su población silvestre se ha estimado en alrededor de 250 individuos, por lo que se encuentra En Peligro Crítico y está incluida en el Libro Rojo de la Unión Mundial para la Naturaleza (UICN). Por esta condición el área ha sido también declarada como **Sitio Alianza Cero Extinción (AZE)**.

Las actividades no sostenibles en el área de Los Haitises, como las del Consorcio Minero Dominicano:

1) Impactarían la formación geológica de Los Haitises, que juega un importante papel en la regulación climática de la región y modificaría el paisaje singular, extraordinario de un ecosistema de incalculable valor.

2) Sentaría un precedente funesto en el uso de una Zona de Amortiguamiento, como espacio de transición cuya función es amortiguar los impactos causados por las actividades humanas, para que no impacten en la zona núcleo.

3) Disminuiría el espacio geográfico que proporciona conectividad entre paisajes, ecosistemas y hábitat naturales, que es lo que asegura el mantenimiento de la diversidad biológica y los procesos ecológicos y evolutivos, mediante la dispersión de especies, asegurando su conservación a largo plazo. Además de permitir el incremento en tamaño de las poblaciones; aumentar las probabilidades de supervivencia de las más pequeñas; beneficiar la recolonización de nuevos individuos locales, lo que reduce depresiones poblacionales debido a la consanguinidad.

4) Pondrían en alto riesgo la sostenibilidad de decenas de comunidades y cientos de miles de personas que dependen de los acuíferos que nacen o se nutren en la zona, además de poner en alto riesgo la salud de los habitantes de Gonzalo y otros poblados de la periferia debido a las emisiones contaminantes fruto del proceso de producción de cemento.

5) Arriesgaría el legado histórico cultural único e irrepetible, representado en decenas de miles de cuevas y cavernas, muchas de los cuales fueron utilizadas por nuestros aborígenes, dejando plasmado en pictografías y petroglifos toda una herencia cultural que ningún país podría darse el lujo de sacrificar.

6) Sería un duro golpe para la solución de los conflictos campesinos que han producido el desplazamiento humano de la periferia del Parque Nacional de Los Haitises.

7) Sentaría un precedente funesto, indefendible, perjudicial y poco optimista sobre el futuro de los recursos naturales de nuestro país y sobre el cumplimiento de las leyes y acuerdos que sustentan la institucionalidad de nuestro país.

8) Frustraría la posibilidad de elaborar un Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial integral y participativo, que incluya el desarrollo sostenible de la región y de las comunidades periféricas.

Por estas y muchas otras razones reclamamos:

1) Que el Estado Dominicano revoque la Concesión otorgada al Consorcio Minero Dominicano para operar en la plataforma de Los Haitises.

2) Que una vez revocada la Licencia Ambiental que ampara la empresa beneficiaria, la Secretaría de Estado de Medio Ambiente y otras instancias pertinentes definan y establezcan los límites y zona de amortiguamiento del Parque Nacionales de Los Haitises.

3) Se elabore el Plan Nacional de Ordenamiento Territorial, en cumplimiento de la Ley General de Medio Ambiente (64-00), con la finalidad de evitar que precedentes como este se pudieran repetir.

Con la firme disposición de llevar esta lucha por los caminos que las Leyes y la Constitución Dominicana permiten, confiamos en la sensatez y buen juicio de nuestras autoridades para comprender la magnitud de este problema y buscar soluciones a la altura de las circunstancias.

Firmado:

Asamblea Nacional Ambiental -ANA-
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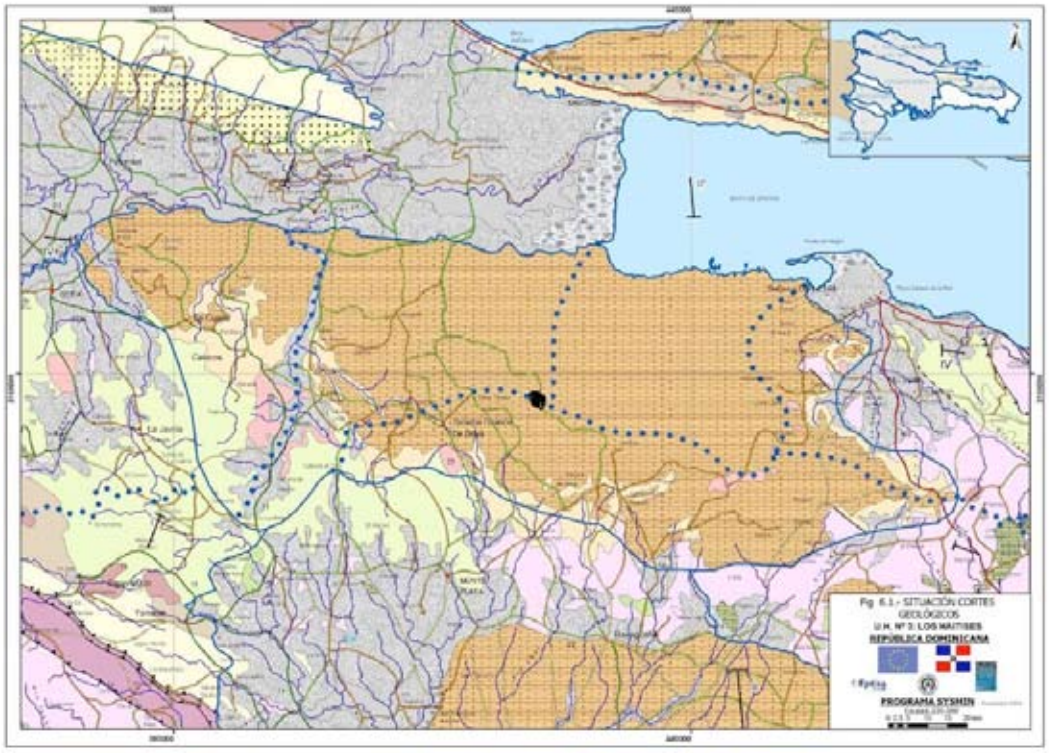

1. Location map.

2. Cave entrance.

3. Pictograph (see text for details).

Camp in Martin Infierno cave, Cuba (ph. Antonio Danieli).

4. Cave drawing (see text for details).


5. Pictograph (see text for details).

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On the basis of the success of the archaeological exploration in the Bükk Mountains in 1906 the Speleological Committee was set up by the Hungarian Geological Society on the 28th of January 1910. The Hungarian Speleological Society as the successor of the Speleological Committee wishes to commemorate the occasion and also the important persons and exploration successes of the last 100 years by organising an international conference.

http://speleohungary100.speleology.hu/

International Journal of Speleology

International Journal of Speleology
www.ijs.speleo.it
Volume 38(2), July 2009

Editorial

Jo DE WAELE

Original papers

Philippe AUDRA, Ludovic MOCOCHAIN, Jean-Yves BIGOT and Jean-Claude NOBECOURT
The association between bubble trails and folia: a morphological and sedimentary indicator of hypogenic speleogenesis by degassing, example from Adaouste Cave (Provence, France)

James J. VAN GUNDY and William B. WHITE
Sediment flushing in Mystic Cave, West Virginia, USA, in response to the 1985 Potomac Valley flood.

Megan D. CURRY, Penelope J. BOSTON, Mike N. SPILDE, James F. BAICHTAL and Andrew R. CAMPBELL
Cottonballs, a unique subaqueous moonmilk and abundant subaerial moonmilk in Cataract Cave, Tongass National Forest, Alaska.

Giancarlo PASINI
A terminological matter: paragenesis, antigravitative erosion or antigravitational erosion ?

Karel ŽÁK, Helena HERCMAN, Monika ORVOŠOVÁ and Ivana JAČKOVÁ
Cryogenic cave carbonates from the Cold Wind Cave, Nízke Tatry Mts., Slovakia: extending the age range of cryogenic cave carbonate formation to the Saalian.

Angel FERNANDEZ-CORTES, Sergio SANCHEZ-MORAL, Soledad CUEZVA, Juan Carlos CAÑAVERAS and Rafael ABELLA
Annual and transient signatures of gas exchange and transport in the Castañar de Íbor cave (Spain).

Max MOSELEY
Observations on the Cave-Associated Beetles (Coleoptera) of Nova Scotia, Canada.

World Karst Science

Acta Carsologica of the Karst Research Institute ZRC SAZU
Volume 37(2-3), 2008
Cave and Karst Science of the British Cave Research Association
Volume 34(3), 2007
Volume 35(1-2), 2008
Journal of Cave and Karst Studies of the National Speleological Society
Volume 70(3), 2008
Volume 71(1), 2009
Subterranean Biology of the International Society of Subterranean Biology
Volume 6, 2008
Travaux de l'Institut de Speologie «Émile Racovitza» of the Académie Roumaine
Volume 47, 2008
Volume 48, 2009

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http://www.uis-speleo.org/

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For International Speleo Calender please check:
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International Union of Speleology

The Union Internationale de Spéléologie (UIS) is the international body for caving and speleology. Formed in 1965, its voting members consist of a delegate from each member country. This delegate represents the country's cavers and speleologists, rather than its national body(s). An elected Bureau runs the affairs of UIS between the 4-yearly General Assemblies held at the International Congresses. The actual speleological work of UIS is done by the members of its Commissions and Working Groups, which are open to everyone who is interested.
[What's New] **Latest edition of *UIS-BULLETIN* now available. (Volume 51-3, December 2008)**

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- Ethics - en | de | es | fr | it | pt | ru
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- UIS Administration
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- Draft Documents for Comment
- Other speleo links