

INTERNATIONAL CAVE ANIMAL of the Year 2021 *cave beetles*

The International Cave Animal of the Year raises attention for the little-known zoological diversity in subterranean habitats in general and with an international focus, thus contributing to global awareness of cave protection.

It is part of the International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK) and an initiative of the International Union of Speleology (UIS). The UIS is comprised of 54 member nations which support the International Year of Caves and Karst.

The UIS hosts the International Congress of Speleology which will be held in Savoie-Technolac, Le Bourget du Lac, Savoie, France in July 2021. It will be expanded into the major international event that will celebrate the International Year of Caves and Karst.

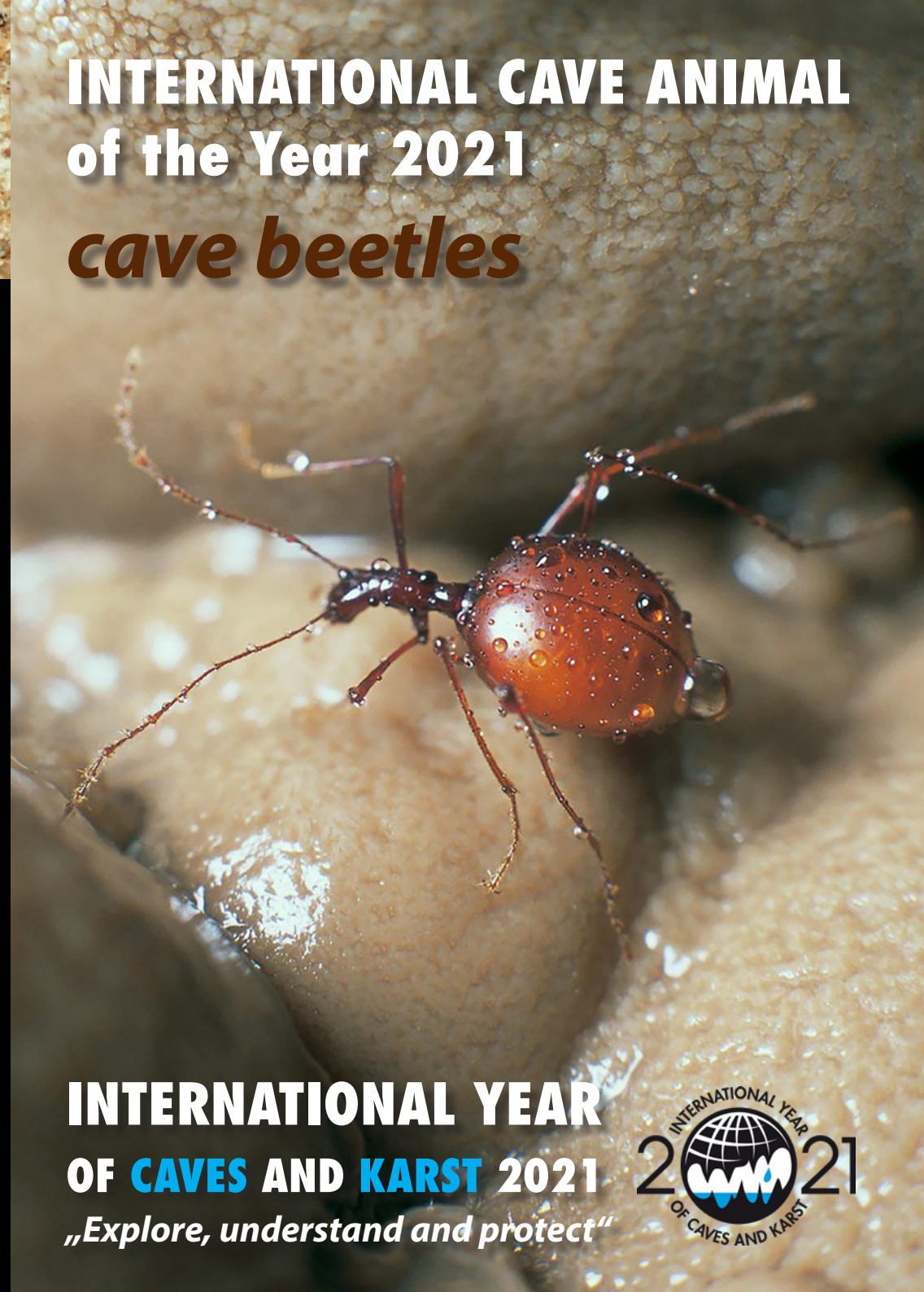
<https://uis2021.speleos.fr/>

The IUCN Species Survival Commission Cave Invertebrate Specialist Group supplies information on endangered cave animals.

www.iucn.org

Different species around the world will be declared as national cave animals of the year for 2021. To learn about them, the cave beetles on this flyer, and for more information about the International Year of Caves and Karst, visit:

www.iyck2021.org



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CAVES AND KARST 2021

„Explore, understand and protect“



Union Internationale
de Spéléologie





Cave Beetles – First International Cave Animal of the Year

Beetles are the most diverse animals in our planet with approximately 400,000 species described.

They are insects, have six legs, a pair of antennae and two pairs of wings. Their forewings (elytra) are hardened, cover part of the body, and together with their hard exoskeleton offer good protection from predators. Beetles can live on land or in water.

The Slenderneck Beetle *Leptodirus hochenwartii* was the first cave insect described. It was first discovered in September 1831 by a cave guide who picked it up while exploring a part of the Postojna cave system in southwest Slovenia. The blind beetle's discovery was published in 1832 by the entomologist Ferdinand J. Schmidt. It lives in cold and usually large caves in South Europe's Dinaric Mountains.

Aquatic cave beetles live in springs and groundwater, are predominately from the family Dytiscidae and are predatory in both their larval and adult forms. They require air to breathe and must access the water surface every 30 minutes to 1 hour. The greatest diversity of stygobiotic dytiscids in the world are within calcrete aquifers in arid Western Australia.

Cave animals can be ecologically classified into three main groups: Occasionally cave visitors, use caves typically for shelter during certain times of the year, but must return to the surface for food, to reproduce, or some other important need. Cave loving animals can spend their entire lives in caves, but also in surface habitats like in the earth, under stones or the bark of trees. They are even able to reproduce in caves, and form permanent populations but have no specific adaptations to life in caves. The "true" cave animals have adapted their complete life history to the subterranean habitat, they lack of eyes, are depigmented, have elongated bodies and appendages, and slower metabolisms than their surface relatives. The famous Slenderneck Beetle *Leptodirus hochenwartii* belongs to this group.

To learn more about cave beetles of the world see www.iyck2021.org



„EXPLORE, UNDERSTAND AND PROTECT“

is the main goal of the International Year of Caves and Karst.

With your help, we seek to:

- **improve** public understanding of how caves and karst touch the daily lives of billions of people
- **promote** the importance of caves and karst through sustainable development, particularly in water quality and quantity, agriculture, geotourism/ecotourism, and natural/cultural heritage
- **demonstrate** how the study and proper management of caves and karst is critical to global economic and environmental health
- **build** worldwide educational capacity through activities targeted on cave and karst science
- **promote** awareness of the interdisciplinary nature of cave and karst science and management, and emphasize how interactions between different areas of science and management will be needed increasingly in future research, education, and environmental protection
- **establish** durable partnerships to ensure that these activities, goals and achievements continue in the future beyond the International Year of Caves and Karst.

