



INTERNATIONAL SHOW CAVES ASSOCIATION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SHOW CAVES ACROSS THE WORLD TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF  
CAVES AND SUBTERRANEAN WORLD ON 6 JUNE.**

*Cave Enthusiasts Across the Globe Bring Attention to the  
Importance of our subterranean world.*

Frasassi/Genga-Italy (6 June 2019) —Members of the [International Show Caves Association](#), join cave enthusiasts around the world to increase awareness about the importance of caves and karst landscapes by celebrating [International Day of Caves & the Subterranean World](#).

Show caves around the world will celebrate the day with special events, tours, and educational activities promoting environmental awareness and conservation, both in classrooms and at their respective caves. From **lectures with some of the speleology world's top experts** to local caving and conservation organizations speaking to the importance of exploring, studying, protecting and preserving our caves and karst landscapes.

"Caves and karst landscapes are places of wonder and majestic beauty. We see the recognition of the importance of our subterranean world increasing worldwide," said Brad Wuest, president of the [International Show Caves Association](#), and president, owner and operator of [Natural Bridge Caverns](#), Texas, USA. "Show caves worldwide are embracing their role of protecting and preserving caves and providing a place for people to learn about these special natural, cultural and historical resources. **Show caves also play an important role in nature tourism** and sustainable development, providing jobs and helping the economy of their regions.

Approximately **150 million people visit show caves each year**, learning about our subterranean world" said Wuest.

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Caves and karst make landscapes diverse, fascinating, and rich in resources, including the largest springs and most productive groundwater on Earth, not to mention at least 175 different minerals, a few of which have only been found in caves. These landscapes provide a unique subsurface habitat for both common and rare animals and preserve fragile [archaeological](#) and [paleontological](#) materials for future generations.

“Everyone is touched by caves and karst. Water, food, cultural history, and scientific research that supports and benefits everyone on the planet—not just the **25 percent of the world’s population who either lives on or obtains its water from karst aquifers,**” said Dr. George Veni, Executive Director of the [National Cave and Karst Research Institute](#) and President of the [International Union of Speleology](#). “Caves are incredibly diverse, and although most caves are found in karst, there are also [lava tube caves](#), sandstone, and glacial caves. Caves can be decorated with [speleothems](#) or ice in colder climates. They can be filled with fresh water or [under the ocean](#). Caves are also rich in biodiversity and home to many plant and wildlife species -- some that are only found in caves,” continued Dr. Veni.

Caves are diverse in depth, length, size and shape as well. [Veryovkina Cave](#) in the Eurasian country of Georgia is the **deepest cave in the world** at 2,212 meters. [Mammoth Cave](#) in Kentucky, USA, has a length of over 651 kilometers and is the longest known cave on Earth. [Sarawak Chamber](#) in [Gunung Mulu National Park](#) in Malaysia is the world’s largest cave room by surface area, with 164,459 square meters of expanse. [Hang Sơn Đoòng](#), in Vietnam, has the **world’s biggest cave passage** with an internal, fast-flowing [subterranean river](#) and a forest ecosystem where sunlight enters the cave from giant [sinkholes](#). It measures 38.5 million cubic meters. [Divers recently discovered an underwater passage](#) in Hang Sơn Đoòng leading to the nearby Thung Cave. When officially connected, it will add 1.6 million cubic meters in volume to the biggest cave in the world.

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"Caves are repositories of pre-history, rich in paleontology with fossils and the bones of prehistoric creatures. Caves often yield the bones of prehistoric animals as well as the artifacts of prehistoric man." said Wuest. The **oldest known [cave paintings](#)** in Europe are estimated to be 64,000 years old in the caves of [Maltravieso](#), [Ardales](#) and [La Pasiega](#), Spain.

"Caves have played more recent history-making roles, from the mining of bat guano to make gunpowder and fertilizer, to France's [Bedeilhac Cave](#) which served as a **hidden French, then German, aircraft hangar** during World War II, "continued Wuest. Criminals, such as the famous [American outlaw Jesse James](#), used caves as both a hideout and a place to store stolen goods. The **oldest known show cave in the world** is believed to be [Reed Flute Cave in China](#) with inscriptions from 792 in the time of [Tang Dynasty](#). The **first recorded cave tour** in Europe was at [Postojna Cave](#), Slovenia in 1213. [Vilenica Cave](#) also in Slovenia, holds the **record for being open to visitors** and collecting entrance fees since 1633.

Caves are important natural resources because of their unique beauty, history, and their role in a healthy environment. They play key roles in groundwater movement, serve as **habitat for threatened and endangered animal** species, and they provide outstanding opportunities for scientific study and gaining a better understanding of the [geology](#) and [hydrogeology](#) of karst landscapes, and the relationships between the environment we see at the surface and the one that is hidden underground.

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Cave photography is available by request.

#### **ABOUT INTERNATIONAL SHOW CAVES ASSOCIATION:**

The [International Show Caves Association \(ISCA\)](#) was founded in 1990 and is headquartered in [Frasassi/Genga](#), Italy. ISCA is an international organization of persons, associations, corporations, and government agencies who own, manage or operate [show caves](#) that are open to the public. ISCA provides a critical forum for show caves to network and collaborate on matters that pertain to their caves. ISCA aims to promote, encourage, and support the cooperation of show cave operators, speleologists and cave enthusiasts through the sharing of information and to promote the preservation and conservation of caves, while increasing public interest in the world of show caves by way of unique marketing and the evolution of methods to enhance the show cave experience.

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