



Conference Abstract

Subterranean fauna in two protected caves in the Hyblean area (Syracuse, Sicily)

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Abstract

Extensive fieldwork has been carried out in two protected caves (Villasmundo and Monello) in eastern Sicily in 2018–2019. The caves, located respectively within the Strict Nature Reserves “Complesso Speleologico Villasmundo-S. Alfio” and “Grotta Monello”, are two of the most important karst systems of the Hyblean area. They are both remarkably developed and possess speleothem specimens of great scientific value such as stalactites, stalagmites, and columns. The study has further increased our knowledge about the existing cave fauna, and focused on the optimization of good conservation practices of hypogean environments. Systematic investigations have confirmed the presence of a rich arthropod community, and, above all, have highlighted species of great importance, including ones new to science. In particular, two pselaphids (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae) of the genus *Tychobythinus* Ganglbauer, 1896 and a dipluran (Entognatha) of the genus *Plusiocampa* Silvestri, 1912 have been identified and described.

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