

Biology Students Association as the base for establishing future experts and cave fauna exploration

Jana Bedek^{‡,§}, Mia Šepčević^{§,||}, Dora Kermek^{§,||,¶}, Lea Okićki^{§,||,¶}, Nikolina Kuharić[§], Tvrтко Dražina^{§,¶}

[‡] Ruđer Bošković Institute, Zagreb, Croatia

[§] Croatian Biospeleological Society, Zagreb, Croatia

[|] Biology Students Association – BIUS, Zagreb, Croatia

[¶] Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

Corresponding author: Jana Bedek (jana.bedek@hbsd.hr)

Abstract

Biology Students Association – BIUS (BIUS) from Zagreb, Croatia is a non-government and non-profit association founded in 1999 by biology students from the Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb. Aiming to develop future experts in different fields of biology, BIUS is composed of groups that specialize in various subject areas. Besides holding diverse science lectures, workshops, and field trips, the main BIUS' activities are annual student research camps with the participation of up to 130 members.

An integral part of BIUS from the very beginning is the Biospeleology group (Group). During these first 23 years of the Group's existence, many members discovered their interest in cave biology through field research, cabinet work, and educational workshops. The Group organized two student research camps and participated in 16 others. In addition, the Group organized seven independent projects. Throughout all of these projects, cave fauna was collected from over 150 caves and pits at different localities of Croatian karst. The Group's long-term existence is facilitated by the guidance of mentors from the Croatian Biospeleological Society. Altogether, the Group provides numerous skills and valuable opportunities to students and is important for developing future scientific experts in cave biology in Croatia.

So far, 12 Group members have written their master thesis and four have their doctoral thesis in the field of cave biology. Former members currently work at universities, research institutes, government, and civil sector, or as entrepreneurs on topics closely related to cave biology and karst research.

Keywords

cave biology, future scientists, student organization, fieldwork

Presenting author

Jana Bedek

Conflicts of interest