

First data about cave fauna from the Albanian Alps

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Abstract

In September of 2021, a Polish expedition took place in the Valbona Valley in the Albanian Alps (Kocot-Zalewska et al. 2021). During the expedition, a project study of invertebrate cave fauna had begun. The main purpose of this presentation is to show the preliminary results of a study on the invertebrate fauna in the Albanian Alps. Within 14 days, arthropods were collected in subterranean habitats between 1500 and 2300 m a.s.l. The study was led on the left and right sides of the Valley. On the left side of the Valley, we explored bauxite mines and Spella Huxhise Cave; on the right side, the Ice Cave, Spella de Akullt, Spella e Valbones, and Spella Sportive caves were explored. Mainly, the direct searching method was used. However, pitfall traps with baits were used in one cave and one tunnel. Altogether, from five caves and a complex of four tunnels, 102 arthropods belonging to insects (beetles, flies, and crickets), millipedes, spiders, harvestmen, and springtails, have been collected. Flies and beetles are the most numerous groups. The majority of the collected specimens have been determined to the species level. Among these, many are new to Albanian fauna. Particular attention should be paid to the species highly related to the subterranean environment and those found in ice caves. This project will continue in the year 2022. We plan to explore the next caves in the studied area and re-examine the previously visited sites.

Keywords

troglobiont, subterranean fauna, spiders, beetles, flies, millipedes

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Conflicts of interest

None

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