



INTERNATIONAL SHOW CAVES ASSOCIATION

ISCA Newsletter

January
February
2023

CONTENTS

Happy New Year!

The International Show Caves Association would like to wish you **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year 2023**. 2022 has been a year of important events, including the celebration of the **International Year of Caves and Karst**, as well as the incredible **ISCA 9th Congress and NCA Convention**. We expect 2023 and the years to come to be as important as the past one, and it is necessary that we start working as soon as possible to promote general enthusiasm towards show caves.



JOIN ISCA NOW!

Do you own or manage a show cave? Would you like to become a member of the [International Show Caves Association](#)? Join us [here](#).



Photo: Grutas de Mira de Aire (Portugal)



Find us on:
facebook®

FOLLOW US!

Do you have photos, videos, articles or any other material to share? Follow our [Facebook page](#) and let us know!

Message from the President

by Friedrich Oedl (contact: oedl@oedl.at)

Hello all my dear show cave friends!

Time goes by too quickly! During our exciting ISCA Congress in Texas at the end of September, the new ISCA Board started to work on the further developing of our worldwide organization.

I would like to point out that in the meanwhile our past president Brad Wuest has held his promises to continue his assistance together with his professional team even though he has laid down his official position in our organization.

As I mentioned at the beginning, I wanted you to know that my ideas and intentions for the further development of ISCA did not find enough time in my personal life in the last two months. However, our team has already had several video meetings and- as you will find in this newsletter- we already have the results of the [ISCA & NCA Show Cave Survey](#).



ISCA President Friedrich Oedl (Fritz) during the 100th anniversary of Eisriesenwelt (Austria). September 2020.

Besides, one of our decisions was to intensify our presence in all the local and regional cave organizations in so many areas of the world. For this already a new letter of introduction was successfully written by our Board, and a short ISCA video presentation is planned to be produced in the near future. It will be our duty to get in more intensive contact to all these wonderful cave organizations!

We have also created a database system where all our publications and relevant files will be saved. These include all kind of documentation such as minutes, scientific articles, presentations, logos, and many other materials which will certainly be useful in the future.

In order to offer access to our association even for caves with a lower budget, we would like to send our newsletter and other publications to anyone who might be interested. Therefore, contact our secretary, Juanjo Tíscar, who will be happy to add any new email contact to our distribution list!

Even though there are no special ISCA events scheduled for this upcoming year it would be nice to share your materials, so make sure you contact Juanjo if there is anything you would like to share.

Three months after the Texas Congress, we are looking forward to 2023 and the following years.

I wish you all an excellent, safe and peaceful Christmas time and show cave season!

All the best to all of you!

Yours,

Friedrich Oedl
President
International Show Caves Association



From the editor

by Juanjo Tíscar (contact: secretary@i-s-c-a.org)



*During my last Christmas (2021) in Costa Rica.
What wonderful country!*

Dear ISCA friends,

One year ago I was in Costa Rica and had one of the most incredible trips in my life. Sun, beach, wildlife, ‘Piña Colada’, caves...I have to admit that it was amazing. Now, one year later, I am so thankful to be surrounded by my family and friends here in Spain.

The thing is the Christmas season in Spain is often cloudy, at some points rainy, and cold (everything which goes under 15°C is cold here), and Costa Rica was the opposite. However, this year we are having an unexpected “summer” for Christmas, and even though I wanted to spend my holidays swimming in the beach, this time we decided to visit some European country...and we chose England. Therefore, it seems winter clothes will be on me this time. FYI, I am leaving

on December 28th and I will be back on January 4th, just in case you contact me. I will be answering your e-mails shortly after coming back!

Before visiting my British friends, I wanted to thank all of you for supporting ISCA during the whole year and contacting me in order to share your materials. I have received so many photos, videos and articles which were published in our newsletters and shared on social media. Please, I can only ask you to keep doing it in the months to come.

I also wanted to thank my ISCA colleagues at the Board. We have had a very intense year of events and even though 2023 will be different, there are so many future projects which we are certain you will love.

As always, I wanted to remind you that I published my novel back in 2019 (three years ago!), and it is my pleasure to let you know that I am open for suggestions just in case you want to sell it at your wonderful show caves. Please, contact me if you need any further details! It's the perfect Christmas gift!



Important reminders

Reminder #1: ISCA dues

Dear ISCA members,

I would like to remind you that it is really important that you complete your [ISCA membership renewal](#) and update your payments, especially in the case of those involving the last years.

Despite the voluntary dues back in 2020 because of the pandemic, now it is time to support ISCA one more time.

During the first two months of 2023, you will also receive dues notice regarding the 2023 payment, and that is why we find it convenient for you not to miss any prior payment.

Don't forget that by doing so, you will be receiving our certificate as ISCA member. Let us know if you are missing yours.

Besides, it goes without saying that there are many other benefits when you join our association.

Of course, let us know if you have any question and, if you are not an ISCA member yet, please, [JOIN US!](#)

Thank you for your collaboration and support.

Reminder #2: Website updates

Some of the show cave profiles on our website need to be updated.

Every ISCA member was provided with their username and address in order to be able to modify any of the cave details to be displayed. However, if you feel like you are not able to do it, let us know and we will do it for you.

In order to do so, I will need the text/pictures which you want to upload. Feel free to contact me anytime!

As you can see, there are some caves such as [Saalfelder Feengrotten \(Germany\)](#) who have recently uploaded their profile with high quality pictures and useful information.

Best,

Juanjo Tíscar
ISCA Secretary
secretary@i-s-c-a.org



ISCA Library



2022 Nov-Dec



2022 Sep-Oct



2022 Jul-Aug



2022 May-Jun



2022 Mar-Apr



2022 Jan-Feb



2021 Nov-Dec



2021 Sep-Oct



2021 Jul-Aug



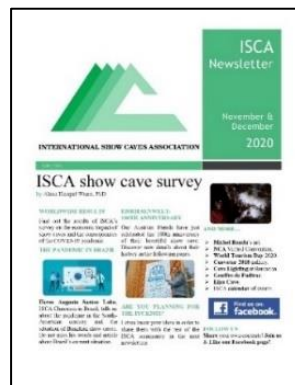
2021 May-Jun



2021 Mar-Apr



2021 Jan-Feb



2020 Nov-Dec



2020 Sep-Oct

ISCA & NCA Show Cave Survey

Post COVID Recovery of the Largest Natural Tourism Attractions in the World

Remains Mixed with Reduced Visitation Persisting

A global survey of show caves, natural tourism attractions with a multi-billion-dollar impact on their communities, illustrates that work is still needed to fuel recovery for the industry.

December 14, 2022 Frasassi/Genga-Italy & Cobleskill, NY – Results of a recent survey of operators of the largest natural tourism attractions in the world, show caves, indicates that recovery from the pandemic remains challenging. In 2021 there were 120.8 million visitors to show caves, an overall 16% decline from a pre-pandemic high in 2019 of 144 million. However, show caves in the United States (U.S.) were up 27%, from 13.8 million in 2019 to 17.5 million in 2021. The assumption is the accelerated opening of tourism in the U.S. along with pent up demand and an emphasis on outdoor recreation may have been the reason for the difference.

Worldwide staffing remains a challenge for show cave operators who rely on tour guides and hospitality professionals. Worldwide employment at show caves is down by 17% from 2019 levels, tracking with hiring challenges that continue to be endemic within the tourism industry as a whole. However, another surprising finding was that direct spending at show caves was up 7% globally (corrected for inflation), indicating the visitors who did come were willing to spend more on the experience overall.

Yet, according to Dr. Jim Petrick, Professor at Texas A&M, “Direct spending at a local attraction is just one aspect of the impact caves have on local economies. Typically, spending doesn’t stop at the attraction as visitors often stop at other businesses in the area including restaurants, hotels, shops, and more. Since tourism spending is also new money to a community, it also has multiplier effects (beyond direct spending) as dollars spent at a cave can often trickle down to the rest of a community. Thus, the economic impact of the cave industry is likely considerably higher than just direct spending.”

The International Show Caves Association (ISCA) and the National Caves Association (NCA) in the U.S. joined together to survey more than 1500 show caves around the world. Respondents represented 10% of the world’s and one third of the U.S. show caves, minus Southwest Asia caves. Operators in Southwest Asia have not responded to surveys, although efforts continue to keep lines of communication open. This year’s survey follows a 2020 effort to establish a baseline of the industry and its impact, and to show the impact of the global pandemic on these hubs for tourism. The 2022 survey follows up on the industry, tracking recovery, growth,

and, unfortunately, closures around the world of these unique natural wonders.

“Ongoing capacity restrictions were causing real challenges for show caves around the world,” said Friedrich Oedl, president of ISCA. “Some caves are still closed, others have ongoing mandates that are keeping them from operating fully. This makes it hard for them to return to pre-pandemic levels of visitation.”

“Show caves are more than unique natural wonders,” said Joe Klimczak, president of NCA. “They have long served an important economic role as engines for local tourism as well. While it’s clear some level of recovery has begun, we still have some ways to go.”

The findings included:

Visitation

In 2021, 120.8 million people visited show caves worldwide, and 17.5 million in the U.S. This is down from the peak of 2019 of 144 million worldwide, but up from 2019’s numbers of 13.8 million in the U.S. The U.S.’s 27% increase in visitors in 2021 is believed to be due to an emphasis on outdoor travel and faster rate of reopening in 2020 and 2021. Still, given that in 2020 94% of show caves worldwide closed due to COVID, the recovery so far is a hopeful indicator of continued possibilities for a full recovery.

Direct Economic Impact

Show caves generated direct visitor spending of \$2.14 billion worldwide with \$382.1 million in the U.S., an increase of 7% and 3% respectively when corrected for inflation. This spending reflects only revenue for the show caves, the impact in the communities surrounding these destinations is also significant.

Restaurants, hotels, and many other local businesses as well as local government entities all benefit from the visitor spending in the communities around show caves. Up from 2019’s spending of \$1.93 billion and \$354 million in the U.S., the change is remarkable, particularly in light of the loss in the first half of 2020 closures that resulted in a loss of 61% of revenue and the drop in visitors in 2021 for caves outside the U.S. It is on track with a reported trend of visitors to attractions spending more while traveling in 2021, a trend that is helping fuel a rebound for the industry.

Jobs

During the closures in 2020, 40,000 people lost their jobs at show caves worldwide, over 3,400 in the U.S. The lower number in the U.S. was largely due to the Paycheck Protection Program established in the U.S.

Worldwide show caves in 2019 employed 69,000. The good news is nearly 57,000 of those jobs have returned (including 7,600 in the U.S.), however hiring remains challenging with two-thirds of respondents indicating they have more jobs than applicants.

Survey respondents represented a sampling of show caves in 195 countries across six continents, including Europe, Asia, Oceania, North and South America, and Africa. Participants included a wide range of government owned and privately held show caves with visitation levels ranging from zero (caves which are still unable to open due to local restrictions) to over 500,000.

Complete [survey results are available here](#).

[Photos available here](#).

About the [International Show Caves Association](#)

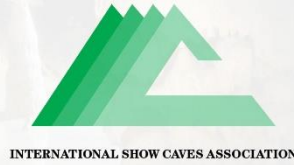
The International Show Caves Association (ISCA) was founded in 1990 and is headquartered in Frasassi/Genga, Italy. ISCA is an international organization of persons, associations, corporations, and government agencies who own, manage or operate show caves that are open to the public.

About the [National Caves Association USA](#)

Founded in 1965 by a small group of private show cave owners from across the United States, the National Caves Association USA (NCA) has been encouraging the public to discover the underground wonders of America's show caves. The Association has grown over the years to include the best show caves across the United States, Bermuda, and Barbados.

-END-

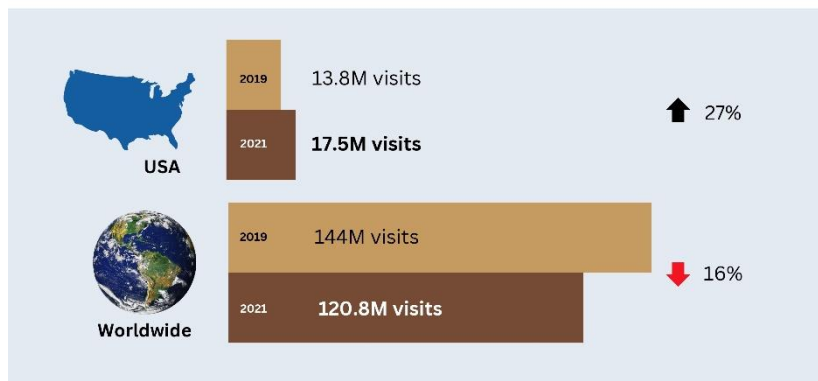
International Show Cave 2022 USA & Worldwide Survey Results



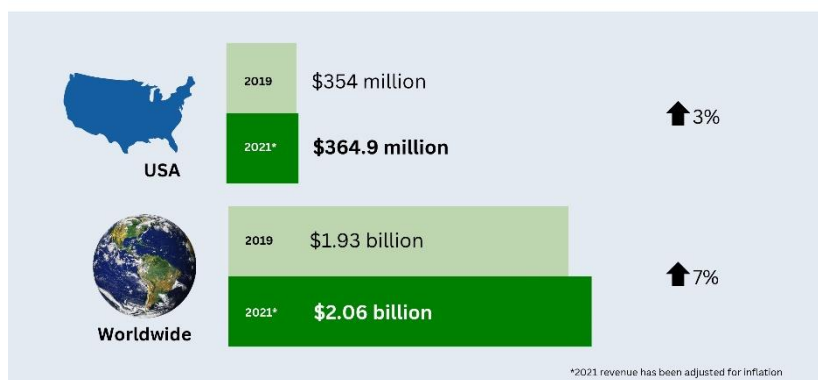
Show Cave Participation Across the World



Show Cave Visitation



Show Cave Revenue



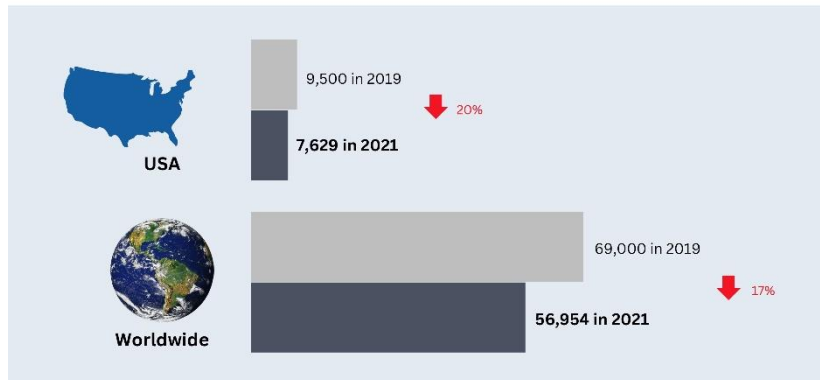
Economic Significance - USA



Economic Significance - Worldwide



Show Cave Employees During Peak Season



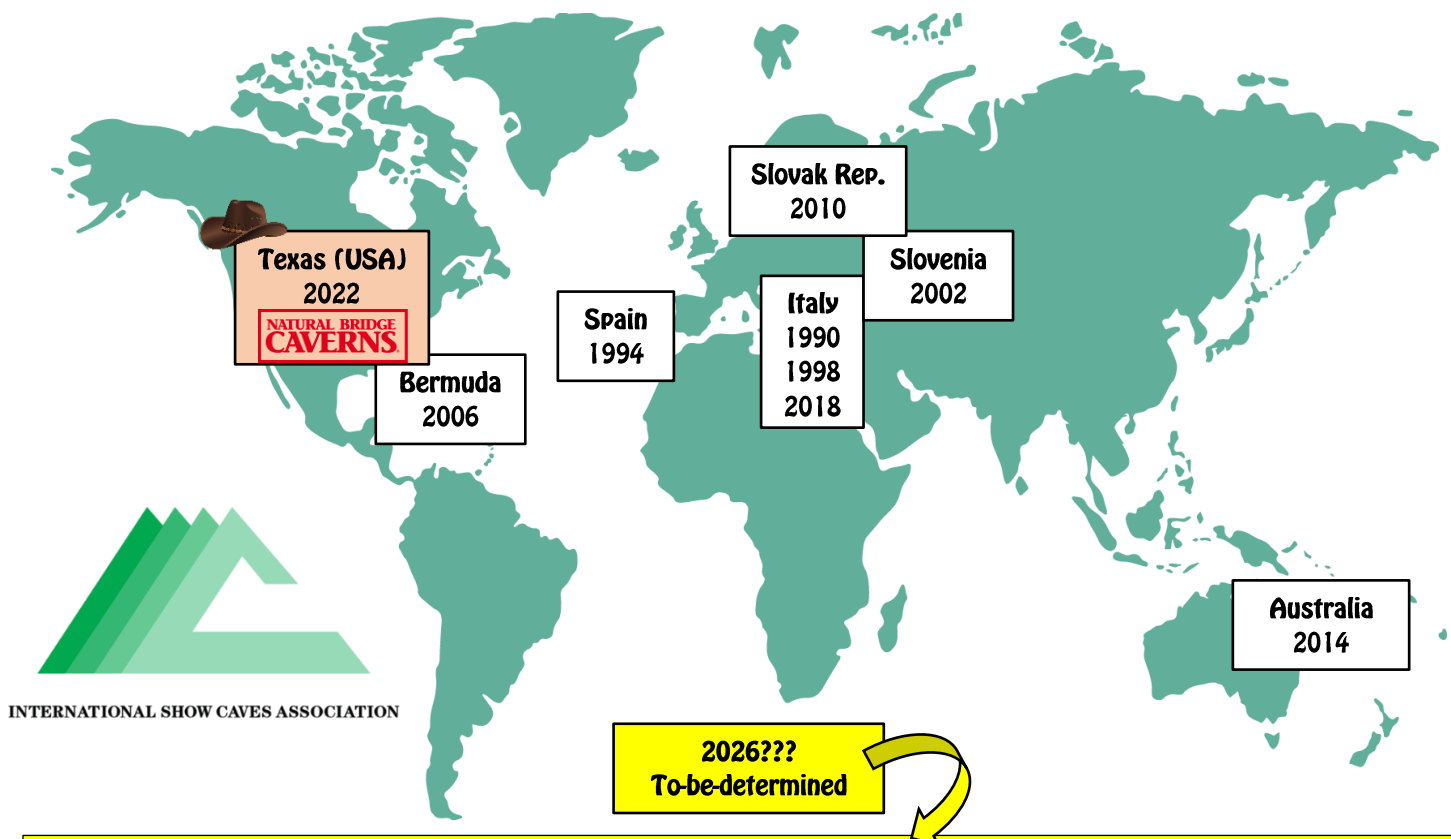
Ready to host future ISCA Congresses, Conferences and Meetings?

After our Congress in 2022, soon we will have to decide where our future Congresses, Conferences and Meetings will take place. If you have a proposal which you think could be interesting, please, let us know. We are open to suggestions!

- **ISCA Congresses.** They are held every four years, preferably during the months of October and/or November. The venue for future congresses shall be determined in the General Assembly of the preceding Congress. General Assemblies take place during each ISCA Congress.
- **ISCA Conferences.** They shall be held two years after the celebration of a Congress, preferably during the months of October and/or November. Applications for sanction to hold a Conference shall be received by the Secretary not less than six (6) months before the proposed Conference is scheduled to commence.
- **ISCA Meetings.** Meeting may be held in the intervening year between a Congress and any Conference. No more than one ISCA Meeting per year may be sanctioned. Applications for sanction to hold an ISCA Meeting shall be received by the Secretary not less than six (6) months before the proposed ISCA Meeting is scheduled to commence. Applicants must be made by a Full Member of the Association.

Please, download and read the [ISCA Constitution](#) and learn more about these events.

ISCA CONGRESSES



Would you like to host an ISCA Congress, Conference or Meeting? [Contact us](#) and let us know!

Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Spanish Show Caves Association



On December 12th, the [Spanish Show Caves Association](#) (ACTE) celebrated their 25th anniversary in La Vall d'Uixó (Castellón, Spain). Members of the Board of Directors, including Manuel Durán (ACTE President), participated in the celebration together with the town mayoress, Tania Baños, and other representatives.

The event commemorated the work of the association for over the last two decades. As Manuel Durán explained, “the Spanish Show Caves Association was founded on June 3rd, 1997 in Nerja (Málaga, Spain)”. A large limestone block was located at the site of the event and, next to it, a time capsule containing objects and documents of interest was buried too.

The International Show Caves Association would like to congratulate ACTE on their success, as it reflects the importance of worldwide associations in order to raise awareness about the significance of show caves.

You can find more information (in Spanish) [here](#).



Source: [La Vall d'Uixó Council Facebook Page](#)



Source: [ACTE Official site](#)

Visit the [official site of the Spanish Show Caves Association](#) and learn more about their history and projects.



CUEVATUR VIII: All Congress photos



[Click here to download the full Congress gallery.](#) Special thanks to Pulpí Council, Geoda de Pulpí and the Spanish Show Caves Association. If the link does not work, please contact us.



Vandals destroy ancient South Australian cave art

original article published at [BBC News](#) by Kathryn Armstrong



Source: BBC News.

[Read the original article here](#)



Sacred artwork in South Australia, which is thought to be about 30,000 years old, has recently been destroyed by vandals who are thought to have dug under a steel gate before scrawling "don't look now, but this is a death cave" on the walls.

The Nullarbor Plain art, which are designs carved into the chalk limestone walls of the Koonalda Cave, has special significance for the region's Aboriginal Mirning people. The Koonalda Cave has been listed as a National Heritage site since 2014.

South Australia Attorney-General and Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Kyam Maher, told ABC Radio that it is a shocking event since "these caves are some of the earliest evidence of Aboriginal occupation of that part of the country."

Senior Mirning elder, Uncle Bunna Lawrie, told the BBC he first heard about the "devastating" vandalism from the media and said it was another example of "the constant disrespect" his people had experienced.

"It's abuse to our country and it's abuse to our history," he said. "What's gone is gone and we're never going to get it back."

Mr Maher said that those found responsible for the vandalism could face prosecution, something Mr Lawrie says he would welcome.

Individuals found to have damaged an Aboriginal site or item currently face a fine of A\$10,000 (\$6,700; £5,500) or up to six months in prison under South Australia's Aboriginal heritage laws. However, the authorities have vowed to strengthen these laws following an inquiry into the destruction of the 46,000-year-old Juukan Gorge rock shelters.

Mr Lawrie said better laws to protect Aboriginal culture should have been put in place a long time ago.

Latest publications



Thanks to the NCA and its Executive Director, **Bob Holt**, for bringing us the latest updates:

Cave Talk: December 2022

Cave Talk: November 2022

Learn more about the NCA on CAVERN.COM



Fédération Française
de Spéléologie

Don't miss the latest issue of **Spelunca** (FR) by the **Fédération Française de Spéléologie**.

Find all FFS publications and order them!

More about the **FFS** [HERE](#)



Latest EuroSpeleo Newsletter! (November 2022)

The **Cave Research Foundation** has recently published their latest newsletter: **August 2022!**



The **latest bulletin** by the **Union Internationale de Spéléologie**. Don't forget to **follow them on Facebook!**



Find the latest newsletters by the **European Speleological Federation (FSE)**.



Please, forward the above documents as widely as possible.

Share yours, too! Is there any other publication you would like to include?

Send it to secretary@i-s-c-a.org and we will publish your materials as soon as possible

The funny side of life



Source: toonpool.com



Source: webdonuts.com

What cave is it?



Photos: ISCA official site

CAVE #28

Hint 1:

Located in Germany.

Hint 2:

They are the most colourful show caves in the world (Guinness Book of World Records).



SEND YOUR ANSWERS

Can you guess the name and location of the cave above?

Cave #27 was Geoda de Pulpí (Almería, Spain).

Send your answers to secretary@i-s-c-a.org



ISCA Calendar

PLEASE NOTE

Some of these events may suffer variations.
You may contact the organization for confirmation.
Do you want to add or modify an event?
Contact us! secretary@i-s-c-a.org



2023

- 27th – 31st March, 2023** – 17th Multidisciplinary Conference on Sinkholes and the Engineering and Environmental Impacts of Karst (Tampa, Florida, USA)
17th April, 2023 – International Bat Appreciation Day
20th – 25th May, 2023 – Clay Minerals Society Conference: Karst Trip and Session (Austin, Texas, USA)
22nd – 26th May, 2023 – 14th International Symposium on Pseudokarst (Sudetes, Poland)
6th June, 2023 – International Day of Tourist Caves and Subterranean World
26th – 29th July, 2023 – 37th Brazilian Congress of Speleology (Curitiba, Brazil)
26th – 30th July, 2023 – NSS Convention 2023 (Elkins, West Virginia)
14th – 17th November, 2023 – IAAPA (Orlando, Florida)
2023 – Cave Lighting Workshop
2023 – NCA Convention 2023 (Lake Shasta Caverns, Redding, California)

2024...and more!

- 2024** – NCA Convention 2024 (Niagara Cave, Harmony, Minnesota)
2025 – NCA Convention 2025 (Luray Caverns, Harrisonburg, Virginia)
2025 – 19th International Congress of Speleology (Belo Horizonte, Brazil)

Deadline!

If you would like to contribute in upcoming publications,
please send an e-mail **before February 20th, 2023!**



Contact: secretary@i-s-c-a.org

Links of interest



INTERNATIONAL SHOW CAVES ASSOCIATION



Would you like to be part of us? Join ISCA!



INTERNATIONAL SHOW CAVES ASSOCIATION

ISCA Membership Application

Not a member of the International Show Caves Association yet? We would be delighted to receive a [Membership Application](#) from you!

Visit [our website](#) and find out more about ISCA.

Become and ISCA member now!

Juan José Tíscar

ISCA Secretary

iscasecretary@i-s-c-a.org

Join us and become an ISCA Member

Visit www.i-s-c-a.org for details.

There are many membership benefits!





INTERNATIONAL SHOW CAVES ASSOCIATION

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.

Special thanks to everyone who collaborated and to those sending your valuable feedback and materials.

Editor: Juan José Tíscar Moya – Contact: secretary@i-s-c-a.org

Issue: January & February 2023

