



Few updates regarding the Tăușoare Cave, Romania

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Abstract. Tăușoare cave is the most important cave from Bistrița-Năsăud county, Romania. It is located in Rodnei mountains, having 20 km galleries length and 413.5 m depth. In the autumn of the last year, a massive collapse of the ceiling, on the cave entrance zone has been noticed, this being the reason for the cave to be completely closed for any kind of research or visit until June 2017. In the last years, the presence of beech marten (*Martes foina*) during winter was observed inside the cave. It only visits the cave for feeding, the main source being the hibernating bats.

Key Words: cave, Rodna Mountains, fauna, ecosystem, collapse, beech marten.

Introduction. In Rodna Mountains, northern Romania, almost one hundred of caves have been mapped (Chiș 2010a), the most interesting one being the Tăușoare Cave, also known as Tăușoarelor Spring Cave (47°26'41.82"N, 24°31'37.87"E), which is located close to Gersa valley, Rebrîșoara village, on the Bistrița-Năsăud county territory. In a previous paper we described many aspects of this cave (Gavriloiu et al 2016). In the present paper we briefly discuss some recent aspects related with this cave.

The collapse of the cave's ceiling. In the autumn of the last year, with the occasion of hibernating bats inventory from the Tăușoare Cave, a massive collapse of the cave's ceiling, on the cave entrance zone, has been noticed. The collapsed rocks were weighting around 15 tones. Due to this event, some equipments which facilitated the access in the cave were heavily damaged; the circumference of the access gallery was reduced from 6 to less than 1 m², which means that on a future collapse the cave may become completely closed, isolating inside the speologists who might be there at that time (Sara 2016; Petrut 2016).

Due to this event, the cave custodian decided to completely prohibit the access in the cave, even for the speologists, for a half of a year (Gavrilaș 2016). But, on March 2017, the custodian made a trip inside the cave, in order to check the cave's ceiling and the hibernating bat colonies. The main threat remains on the cave entrance, where a huge rock is still stocked between the walls' cave, right above the entrance (Bradea 2017b). During this exploration trip, a survival kit was placed in one of the cave's galleries, in case the speologists remained blocked in the cave. After this visit, the custodian decided to permit the access for the speologists starting with June.

The beech marten in Tăușoare cave. During the winter in recent years, more and more tracks of a new visitor were discovered in some galleries. It is about a small mammal, the beech marten (*Martes foina*), which visits the cave searching for food. Dozens of its tracks and feces were discovered, one conclusion being drawn: it feeds with the hibernating bats (Sasarman 2016), but it is not established in the cave (Bradea 2017a).

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