

ASF Cave Diving Group (ASF-CDG) Activities Report 2009

In the past 12 months, ASF-CDG members have been involved in a number of cave diving projects across the country as well as New Zealand. The following is a summary of notable events and achievements:

- A. New Zealand (Mt Arthur)- The Pearse Resurgence. The cave was explored and mapped to a depth of -182m by ASF cave divers, making this the deepest cave diving site in the region. Following the source of the chilly mountain waters, the divers discovered a large horizontal tunnel at the maximum depth which is yet to be explored.
- B. Nullarbor (WA) - Cocklebiddy Cave. The end of the cave was extended by over 120m in 2008 to a 1,893m penetration from Toad Hall.. This was verified and further survey work was conducted during a return visit in March 2009. Over 1700m of passages in the second and third sumps, as well as Toad Hall itself were surveyed by Tim Payne & team in late 2008. Only a short section of the second sump remains to be surveyed before a complete and accurate map of the cave can be generated. The survey has been a collaborative effort by a number of different dive teams over several years.
- C. Junee-Florentine System (TAS). Intrepid ASF cave divers have verified the current limit of this system which offers potential for many kilometres of cave diving exploration in future years. David Apperley repaired line in Junee Cave which enabled the underwater breakdown rockpile at the end of the second sump to be inspected for continuation.
- D. Tigers Eye System (TAS). A newly discovered cave diving system is being explored and mapped by ASF cave divers. In 2009, one hundred metres of virgin passage at up to 40m depth were explored and the passages continue. Diving occurs on a seasonal basis.
- E. Buchan Area (VIC) - Elk River Cave has been radically extended by diving to become The Murrindal Potholes Eastern Master Cave (MPEMC). A number of upstream and downstream sumps have been explored and surveyed to reveal over 1300m of virgin streamway passage. This is arguably the most important cave discovery in eastern Victoria since 1910. Exploration continues.
- F. Mount Gambier (SA) - Piccaninnie Ponds Spring System. ASF cave divers have continued the exploration and surveying of a new chamber at over 100m depth in the main site, as well as documenting new caves in the surrounding wetlands. A scientific study of the local hydrology has been commenced in close cooperation with local water and land management authorities.
- G. Mount Gambier (SA) - Fossil Cave Palaeontological Work. In August 2009, ASF cave divers discovered bone fossils from a new area in Fossil Cave. Amongst the fossils were two megafauna jaws belonging to the *Simosthenurus/Procoptodon occidentalis* (a grazing kangaroo). The bone material is held and being studied by staff at Flinders University.
- H. Great Barrier Reef (QLD) - Australian Blue Holes Project. October 2009 saw commencement of a national project to document and study oceanic blue holes. A live-aboard trip to the Great Barrier Reef saw three blue holes being dived, two of them in excess of 85m depth. The project includes a number of ASF cave divers.
- I. Jenolan (NSW) - Imperial Streamway. The downstream sumps and passages are being re-surveyed. Beyond the first upstream sump, some unexplored roof holes are being explored by cave divers using scaling poles. Work continues.
- J. Jenolan (NSW) - Southern Streamway/River Lethe. Newly produced maps of the Jenolan cave system has identified new possible connections between caves that are being explored by cave divers. A new sump was also discovered which will be explored and surveyed.
- K. Wellington (NSW) - McCavity Cave. Falling water levels in the cave may soon result in it no longer being a cave dive, but a swimming passage which is good news for cavers, not good news for cave divers!

Several ASF-CDG Members received recognition for their cave diving efforts during the year. Richard Harris and Steve Trewavas received Outstanding Achievement Awards for Cave Exploration at the OzTek'09 Technical Diving Conference. At the same event, Rick Stanton (British Cave Diving Group) presented ASF-CDG member Craig Challen with his award of Australasian Technical Diver of the Year 2009.

With many interesting cave diving projects under way around the country, the objective for the ASF-CDG in 2010 is to bring some co-ordination to these activities and improve communication between all ASF cave divers.

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