Inventory of Important Karst Geological Monuments as Part of the Census of Geosites Deserving Protection in the Region of Abruzzo

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The Region of Abruzzo has often recognized, in its planning reports, the importance of karst areas and caves, and a specific Regional Law concerning speleology has been in effect since 1972. Nevertheless, effective and direct environmental protection of the karst areas and caves must be still achieved. A first concrete attempt to protect a cave, and its external environmental context, was made by means of Regional Law no. 32, which established the Regional Natural Reserve of the Pietrasecca Caves. A new opportunity is offered by the Census of Geological Monuments (Geosites) requested by the Region of Abruzzo. Within this context, all the natural cavities worthy of interest (morphological, hydrological, archaeological) will be censused, by means of a special form to be illustrated in this contribution. On the basis of this survey, a global legislative decree will subsequently be issued that will provide for their integral and specific protection.