

The Eastern Amazonian Caves

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Abstract

Most of the caves of the Amazon are still undiscovered. The GEP has found 56 caves distributed in five speleological provinces in this region. The first of these provinces the Altamia-Itaituba Province, with the largest cave of 1500 m formed in sandstone of the Maecuru formation (Silurian) and limestone of the Carboniferous Itaituba formation. The second is the Monte Alegre Province, with archaeologically important caves of less than 100 m, formed in Tertiary sandstones of the Alter do Chão formation. The third is the Serra das Andorinhas cave area, formed in Precambrian quartzites of the Estrondo Group, which developed by the dissolution of Si cement of the rocks followed by groundwater flow along fractures controlled by regional uplift and landscape development of the Tertiary-Quaternary. The caves of the fourth province, the Serra do Piriá, and the fifth, the Serra dos Carajás province, are small (from 30-150 meters) and formed in bauxite and iron-rich soil by complex pedogenetic processes.