Shows me Control of the Control of t

TOURISM AND NATURE IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

"DISCOVER"

Bayahibe

PARADISE OF THE FIVE SENSES

CAÑO HONDO

EL PARAISO DE LOS CINCO SENTIDOS

VUELVE LA MAYOR FIESTA DEL CARIBE

THE BIGGEST PARTY IN THE CAR BBEAN IS BACK, DESALIA

DISCOVER / TOP BEACHES / MEDICAL TOURISM / SPA / LIFESTYLE / ESSENTIAL & MORE

discover

ADVENTURE / TOURS / SENSATIONS / SPORTS / FISHING / DIVING

El buceo en cuevas sumergidas es la modalidad que exige más técnica, preparación, entrenamiento y formación. El espeleobuceo reúne el peligro de ambas actividades, conformando una categoría aparte con métodos, técnicas y equipos distintos y sólo reservado para un pequeño grupo de escogidos expertos que anteponen su vida por la pasión por la exploración y la investigación

EXPLORANDO

LO DESCONOCIDO





leological Society, unos 40 poseen al

cia adquirida a lo largo de los años en

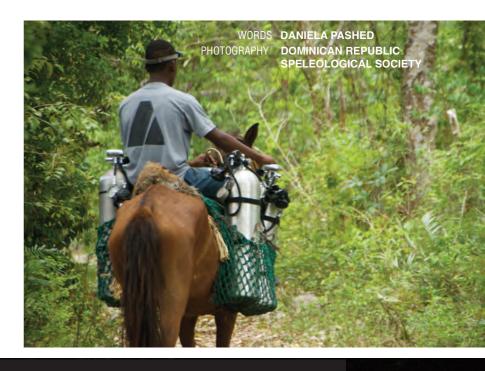
un gran número de científicos naciona-

Ominican Republic is an ideal country to practice this activity. Famous caves as El Dudú, in Maria Trinidad Sanchez province, or Padre Nuestro "Our Father", in Bayahibe, and other less known as La Taina or La Roca in Santo Domingo, are just some examples of places where the passageways, the rock formations and the blue backgrounds make up a world that is totally unknown.

"Usually when we do exploration diving, it is all documented with photos and videos, if we find something that strikes our attention, we show it to our team," says Cristian Pittaro, member and a founder of the Dominican Republic Speleological Society, DRSS. What Pittaro calls his "team" is made up a large number of national and international scientific experts from various disciplines such as biology, paleontology, geology, etc., as well as government institutions such as The Museum of Man or the Environmental Ministry of the Dominican Republic. Currently this company is working on a variety of projects, even outside the country, such as cataloging Dominican springs and caves. "We have created the first available database and have accounted about 80 caves in the eastern part of the country," says Pittaro. Of about 50 discoveries by the Speleological Society, about 40 have at least one cave, the rest are springs.

Friends Become a Society

The Dominican Republic Speleological Society is composed by Phillip Lehman, Dave Pratt, Thomas Rif-



faud, Victoria Alexandrova, and Cristian Herrera Mairobi Pittaro, and even though they have formalized the entity officially little over a year ago, they have four years exploring caves in the Dominican Republic. The experience gained over the years in this risky activity also leads them to participate in joint explorations in other countries.

Generally, the method to carry out the expeditions was that one or more people would help the divers put on their equipment and then wait patiently for them to



esta arriesgada actividad les lleva también a participar en exploraciones conjuntas en otros países.

Generalmente, el método para realizar las expediciones consiste en que una o más personas hagan de ayudantes para colocar el equipo a los buceadores y les aguardan pacientes en la entrada. Cada vez que se recorre un pasadizo inexplorado se tiende un hilo que evita que el buceador se pierda en su regreso, de modo que la mayor parte del recorrido se hace cogido a estos hilos guía hasta el lugar deseado. Una vez allí y según el trabajo, los componentes pueden realizar su tarea en grupo o dividirse.

En el buceo convencional se desaconseja siempre trabajar solo, sin embargo en este deporte extremo los expertos aseguran que es mejor que cada uno vaya a lo suyo, ya que así se concentran mejor y se tiene mucho más cuidado, evitando confiarse, y cada uno así es responsable de su vida. El recorrido por los pasadizos y pozos subterráneos casi nunca es fácil, ya que la mayor parte de las veces los lugares son estrechos y de una disposición caprichosa que desorienta. La oscuridad y lo desconocido siempre están presentes, al igual que la cantidad de aire disponible. Se suele dejar una tercera parte del aire que respiran para la ida, otra para la vuelta y el otro tercio para emergencias.

Otra dificultad añadida suele ser las superficies lodosas que con la más mínima alteración, ya sea por el aleteo o por rozarlas, "se desprende tal cantidad de partículas que inundan el agua de modo que no permiten ni que uno pueda verse la mano, aquí el hilo guía es nuestro salvavidas", dicen algunos expertos.

Son muy pocos los que se hallan capacitados para practicar este deporte, son siempre personas responsables y conscientes del peligro, nunca temerarias y con una buena razón para arries-



are rarely easy, since most of the time these spaces are narrow and very capricious, great for disorientation. The darkness and the unknown are always present, as is the amount of air available. Two thirds of the air is usually reserved for the dive and a third part is reserved for emergencies.

Another difficulty are the muddy surfaces that with the smallest of movement, either by touching them or almost tou-

come back. Each time a new passageway is explored, a lifeline is placed so that the diver can come back, and so that most of the route is done with these guide lines to the desired location. Once there and according to the work, the team can perform its task in a group or apart. In conventional scuba diving you are strongly advised never to work alone, however, in this extreme sport experts say that it is best that each go and perform their separate task, it is better for concentration and therefore each one is more careful, avoiding to be entrusted, and each one is responsible for his or her own life. The journey through the ching them "large amounts of dark sediments flood the water turning it pitch black and not letting us see our own lifeline" say some experts.

There are very few people that are trained to practice this sport, they are very responsible and are aware of the danger, and they are never reckless and possess a good reason for risking their life in each dive, either for science or exploration.

Discovery Pioneers

The members of the Dominican Republic Speleological Society have had several important discoveries. They discovered a bacteria in a place where no other type of life could exist as are the acidic environments or those that lack oxygen. Jennifer Macalady, Geomicrobacteriologist, currently carries out stu-

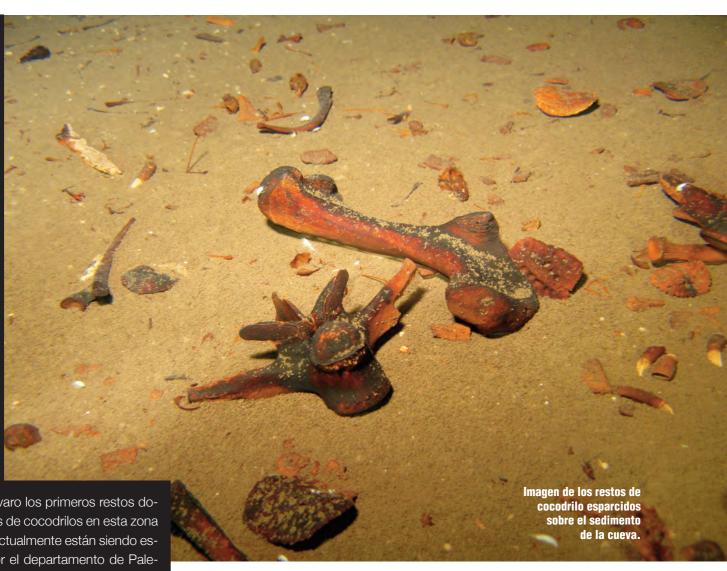




dies of this scientific discovery. According to Macalady, what was found is not known to science. The DRSS also discovered in the Bávaro area the first traces of crocodiles on the island and these findings are currently being studied by the Paleontology Department of the Museum of Man. These and many other achievements have specialists from Brooklyn College in New York studying their discoveries made by the DRSS which more than made by professionals, is made up by friends.

Safety First

Since its foundation, the DRSS has been insisting that diving schools scattered across the country realize that cave and open sea diving are not the same. They insist on not taking tourists to places that may seem safe and are actually not so. This is why they would like to take this opportunity and the editing staff as well to ensure compliance with all safety standards and that every guide that currently provides this service has the mandatory certifications.



zona de Bávaro los primeros restos documentados de cocodrilos en esta zona de la isla y actualmente están siendo estudiados por el departamento de Paleontología del Museo del Hombre.

Pero sus logros llegan a tal nivel que incluso especialistas del Brooklyn College de Nueva York estudian descubrimientos hechos por la esta Sociedad integrada por profesionales, pero sobre todo amigos.

La seguridad, lo primero

La DRSS desde su fundación viene insistiendo en que las escuelas de buceo repartidas por el país tomen conciencia de que el buceo en cuevas no es lo mismo que en mar abierto. Por eso insisten en la sensibilización para que no se lleve a los turistas a lugares que puedan parecer seguros y en verdad no lo son. Desde estas páginas hacen un llamamiento, al que se une la Redacción de Show me Dominicana, para que se respeten las normas de seguridad y que los guías que prestan actualmente este servicio tengan las certificaciones obligatorias.

