

CAVING IN THE PERUVIAN ANDES: 2004 EXPEDITION

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In 1996, a new high elevation pit area in Peru was discovered. Since then, nearly annual expeditions into the area have occurred. This karst, averaging about 14,000 ft in elevation, proved to have an incredible concentration of deep pits. Of the 23 known limestone open-air pits over 100 m in depth in South America, 18 are in this area. Three of these pits are over 150 m in depth. In July of 2004, Steve led another expedition into this area to reconnoiter further out into the wilderness and examine the potential for caves. A new base camp was established and the group made a number of new cave discoveries, including a multi-drop cave that was pushed to a constriction at -300 m. The caves in this new area were unlike most of the pits previously discovered in that a number of them contained both airflow and water. The group theorizes that the caves feed into a larger main-drain system, and future expeditions are being planned.