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ABSTRACT

Prau Cave is an underwater cave located in Tuban, East Java Indonesia. Historically speaking this cave has long been utilized by the local people of Tuwiri Wetan Village as their primary water source and has never been explored due to its high risk. However, on the 8th of May 2022, a cave diver named Rinto Ariyadi and his team conducted an exploration of the cave which revealed a large complex underwater cave system. In the process of the exploration vertebrate and invertebrate fossils were discovered in various points of the cave. The purpose of the research is to identify fossil species found inside the cave, to determine its age, and to determine their origin. This research will use random sampling of a few fossil samples from inside the cave and the surrounding area were taken for further analysis to identify its taxon and to determine its relative age by using foraminifera analysis. The results revealed that the fossils found were mainly marine mollusks, however an echinoid fossil was also found and the remains of a primate in the cavern area. The age of the marine fossils were from the early pliocene which corresponds to an absolute age of 4.37–5.20 Mya. The fossils could be found all across the cave and were part of the upper layer matrix which collapsed down into the cave due to geological processes, however the cave potentially holds more fossils to be discovered, and possibly extends further than what has been explored today.

KEY WORDS: Foraminifera, Fossils, Underwater Caves, Prau Cave, Tuban.