

CAVE BEAR

On 25 March 2016, Slovenia issued a single stamp depicting the skull of a Cave Bear (*Ursus spelaeus*). Shown here is a first day cover with a pictorial postmark and cachet based on the reassembled cave bear skeleton in the Slovenian Museum of Natural History in Ljubljana. The museum is Slovenia's oldest cultural and scientific institution.



Slovenia First Day Cover with pictorial postmark

Slovenia has more than 70 documented cave bear sites. Cave bears are a typical example of Pleistocene megafauna that once roamed Europe and western Asia.

Enormous quantities of bones have been unearthed in many caves, indicating the presence of up to a thousand animals. The last cave bears in Slovenia died out approximately 25,000 years ago.

All cave bears used to be lumped together as *U. spelaeus*. Genetic analyses have enabled researchers to prove the existence of a number of other species or subspecies. These are distinguished from each other both by genetic differences and by the shape of their skulls and teeth.

The stamp is perforated 14 and was designed by Edi Berk and printed by four-color offset in sheets of 25 by *Agencija za komercijalnu djelatnost, Zagreb, Croatia*.

