

A scuba diver died Monday while diving at Manatee Springs State Park in Chiefland — the second diver death in the last week in North Florida.

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Accident #1

Bobby Rothel, 19, of Panhandle, Texas, was found by rescue divers near an underwater area called Catfish Hole in Manatee Springs, according to Sgt. Scott Tummond with the Levy County Sheriff's Office.

Rothel was airlifted to Shands at the University of Florida after being rescued from the water around 1 p.m. Monday, but Tummond said Rothel was pronounced dead at the hospital.

Tummond would not go into specifics about how the young man got trapped under the water Monday. He said the medical examiner's office will be doing an autopsy, but drowning is the likely cause of death.

"He did run out of air," Tummond said. "He was diving with two buddies and, at some point, got separated from the buddies."

Tummond said Rothel and his friends were not actually cave diving, but they were diving in an area that would fall under the category of cavern diving — where an overhead obstruction does not allow direct access to the surface, he said.

Monday's incident marks the second diver death in less than a week, with the Lafayette County Sheriff's Office reporting that a certified cave diver from Virginia died last week while diving alone in a spring along the Suwannee River.

Accident #2

Lafayette County Sheriff Carson McCall said last week that the body of Ronald Wayne Simmons, 53, of Charlottesville, Va., was recovered Thursday in a remote spring in northwest Lafayette County known as Allan Millpond Springs.

Simmons was reported missing Wednesday when he didn't show up at a friend's house in Alachua County, and searchers located his vehicle near the spring run that leads to the Suwannee River.

Certified cave divers from around the area were called in to search for Simmons. They located his body about 300 feet from the mouth of a shallow cave, and by looking at dive journals, investigators said Simmons apparently had been inside the same cave as many as 40 times before last week's fatal dive.

Eine Erläuterung eines anderen Forumteilnehmers zu den Oertlichkeiten:

Someone already has told a good bit about Ron so I'll not cover that accident. Ron was a very advanced dry and wet cave diver.

Catfish hotel has a downstream and an upstream. There is quite a bit of current if you go too far under the rock into the downstream. (Upstream also has a lot of current, I personally saw a SS scooter stand still in the flow set on a 7) .

As the opening closes in size the current gets stronger and stronger. I did most of my open water training at Manatee in OW areas and I was always warned to stay clear of overhead.

Since I've gotten full cave, I've done both sides. I've got to say if you tried to swim out of the downstream when the current was bad you could really suck down a tank of air fast. If you did not have the training to deal with it I could see where the diver got in over his head in a short time trying to swim out. If on the other hand he had gone with the cave it would not have used as much air as its not a long run, but if you go through the other side you got to be real careful on exit to not get an air embolism it shoots you out so fast.

I do not have any facts on what level the diver was trained to but if he was OW he did not have enough. Like Carl said a siphon cave is more difficult to plan for even for trained and equipped cave divers My experience in overhead is limited at Manatee but I do have respect for it. Regardless of what happens I feel for his family and friends.