Sinkholes

Sinkholes have both natural and artificial causes. They tend to occur most often in places where water can dissolve the bedrock (especially limestone) below the surface, causing overlying rocks to collapse. Florida, Texas, Alabama, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania are most sinkhole-prone.

Basics

Most sinkholes occur in places where water can dissolve the rock below the surface, for example where the bedrock is limestone, salt, or gypsum. They can collapse very quickly, or slump slowly over time. Many sinkholes occur naturally, but human activities can also cause them. Over-pumping of groundwater, mining, and leaking pipes beneath roads and buildings are common causes of artificial sinkholes.

Frequently Asked Questions

- How long does it take for a sinkhole to stop growing?  
  Florida Geological Survey
- Which areas are most at risk for sinkholes?  
  U.S. Geological Survey

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Second report of the Geological Survey of Indiana made during the year 1870

1871, Indiana Geological and Water Survey

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