

Pleistocene vertebrate fossils from the An Nefud.

To date, fossils of Pleistocene vertebrates (aged 2.6 million to 11 thousand years old) are rare finds in the Arabian Peninsula. This display shows a small selection of fossils that were recovered during fieldwork in November 2013 in the Nefud desert.



The fossils were recovered during excavations by the Saudi Commission of Tourism and Antiquities and the Palaeodeserts project. The fossils were found in association with the remains of a Pleistocene lacustrine (lake) deposit and are the subject of ongoing scientific analysis.

Fossil display

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Case 1

This case contains elements from the family Bovidae; preliminary analyses have indicated that they are attributable to *Oryx* sp. possibly the Arabian oryx, *Oryx leucoryx*.

- 1) scapula (shoulder blade)
- 2) maxilla fragment (upper jaw)
- 3) mandible (lower jaw)
- 4) humerus (upper front leg)



Case 2

This case includes specimens from two mammalian genera: *Panthera* (large cats) and *Equus* sp. (horse family).

- 1) fourth metacarpal from an extinct cat - the Eurasian jaguar, *Panthera gombasziensis*. This species is only known from fragmentary fossils. We hope that further excavations will yield more specimens and shed light on this extinct fossil cat.
- 2) femur (upper hind leg) - *Equus* sp.



Case 3

Elephants in the genus *Palaeoloxodon* were among the largest known terrestrial mammals on Earth. In addition to the large tusk that was recovered in November (photo right), these extinct elephants were also represented by two bones from the front foot:

- 1) carpal III (magnum) - *Palaeoloxodon* sp.
- 2) accessorium (pisiform) - cf. *Palaeoloxodon* sp.

