Fossil-Bearing Cave Sediments in Northeastern Wisconsin:

Glimpse of a Presettlement Fauna

by

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Abstract

A pit cave on the Door Peninsula of Lake Michigan has yielded a large quantity of vertebrate fossils which predate European occupation. Charcoal fragments from the surface of the deposit have yielded radiocarbon dates of 670 and 1820 years BP. The project is still in its infancy stages, and buried materials are expected to be much older.

The cave apparently has acted as a natural pitfall, trapping animals ranging in size from land snails to black bear. Analysis of the remains may permit an unprecedented reconstruction of northeastern Wisconsin's presettlement fauna. These results, in turn, may be compared with vegetational and climatic reconstructions over the same time period.