

Page Museum
La Brea Tar Pits
Los Angeles, California
September 2002





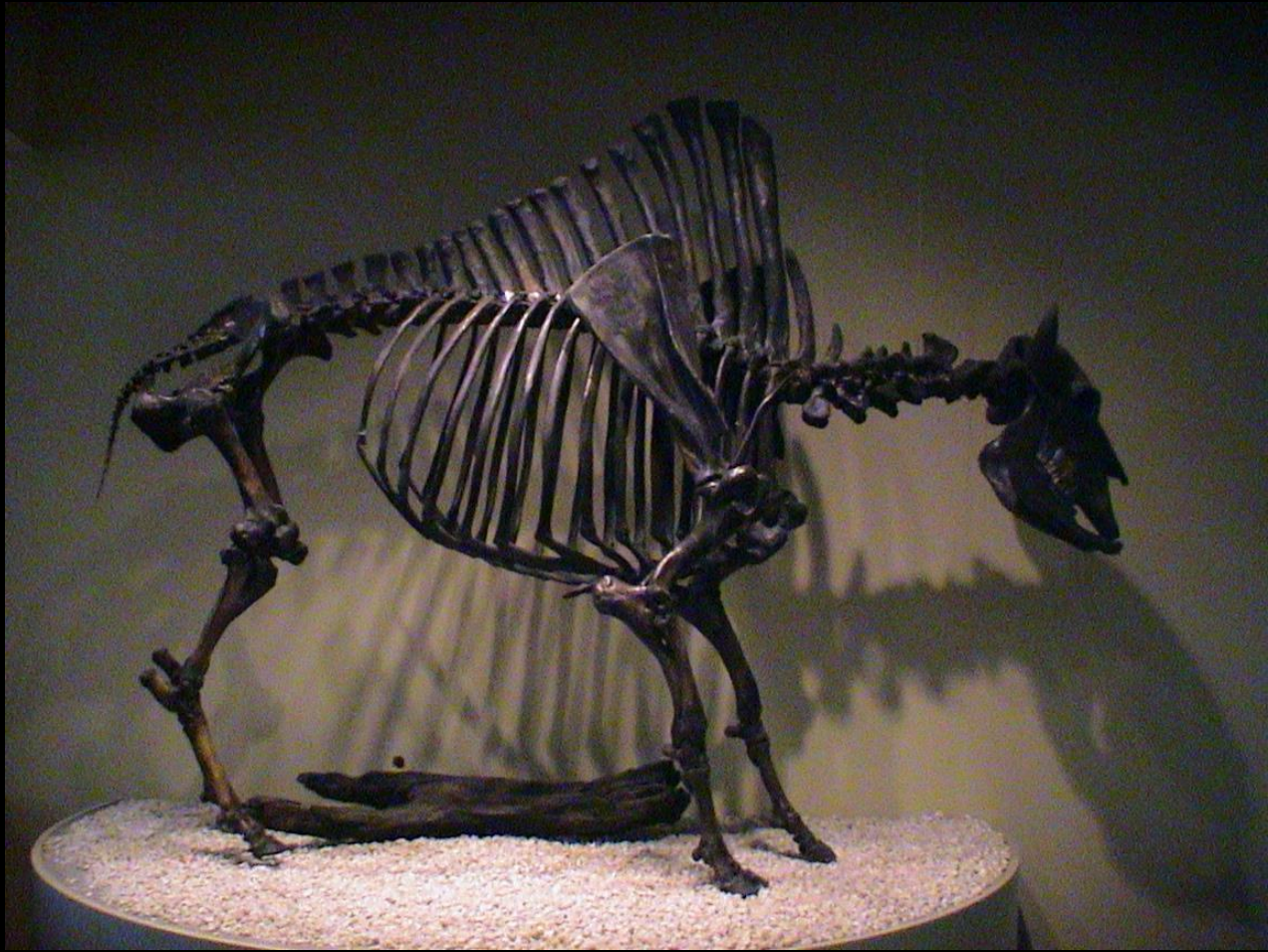




Harlan's Ground Sloth *Glossotherium harlani*

This medium-sized ground sloth stood a little over six feet tall and weighed about 1500 pounds. Its simple, flat, grinding teeth indicate that it probably preferred a diet of grass, although it may have also fed on tubers, bushes and trees. Ground sloths are primitive mammals related to the present-day armadillos and the small tree sloths of Central and South America.

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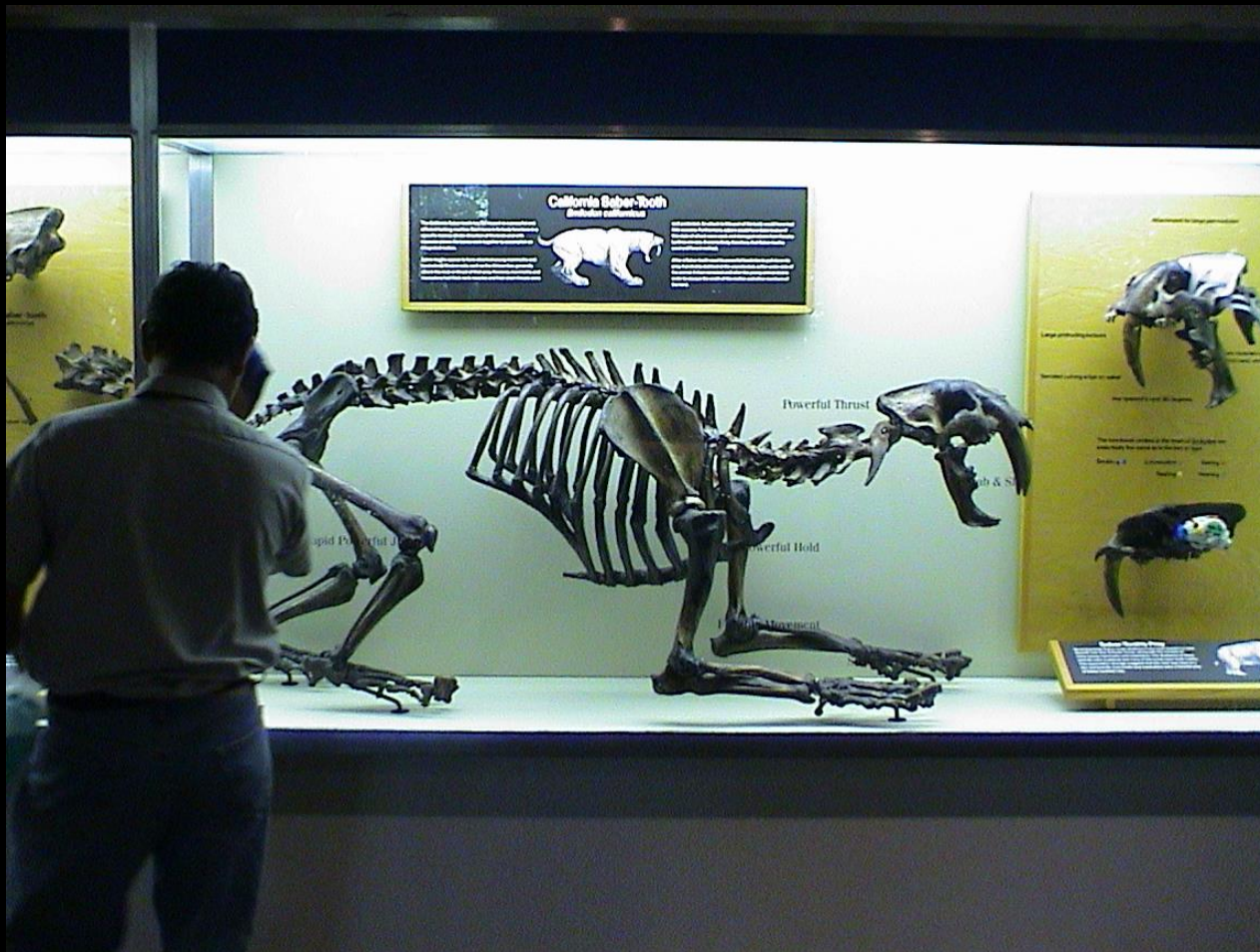


Antique Bison
Bison antiquus

The Antique Bison is the most common plant eater found at Rancho La Brea. At least 160 of these animals have been retrieved. This extinct bison had a larger body, greater shoulder hump and longer horns than the modern buffalo.

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Tracks of Mammals
Mammals and Birds
The tracks of mammals and birds are visible in the sandstone of the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument.

Woolly mammoth/*Mammuthus primigenius*

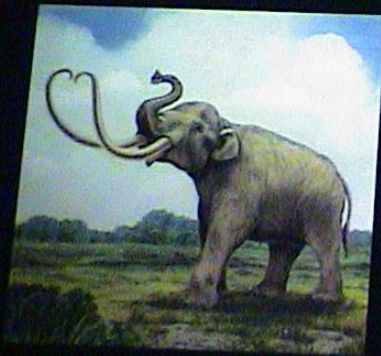
This model is two thirds natural size

Woolly mammoths lived in the northern parts of Eurasia and North America during the Pleistocene Ice Age. Their range did not extend as far south as California. Woolly mammoths were smaller than the Columbian mammoth and about the size of living Asian elephants.









Columbian Mammoth
Mammuthus columbi

The Columbian mammoth was the commonest mammoth to live in North America during the Ice Age. Some mammoths from Rancho La Brea grew to a height of thirteen feet. This specimen is of average size, about fifteen thousand pounds in weight and twelve feet tall.

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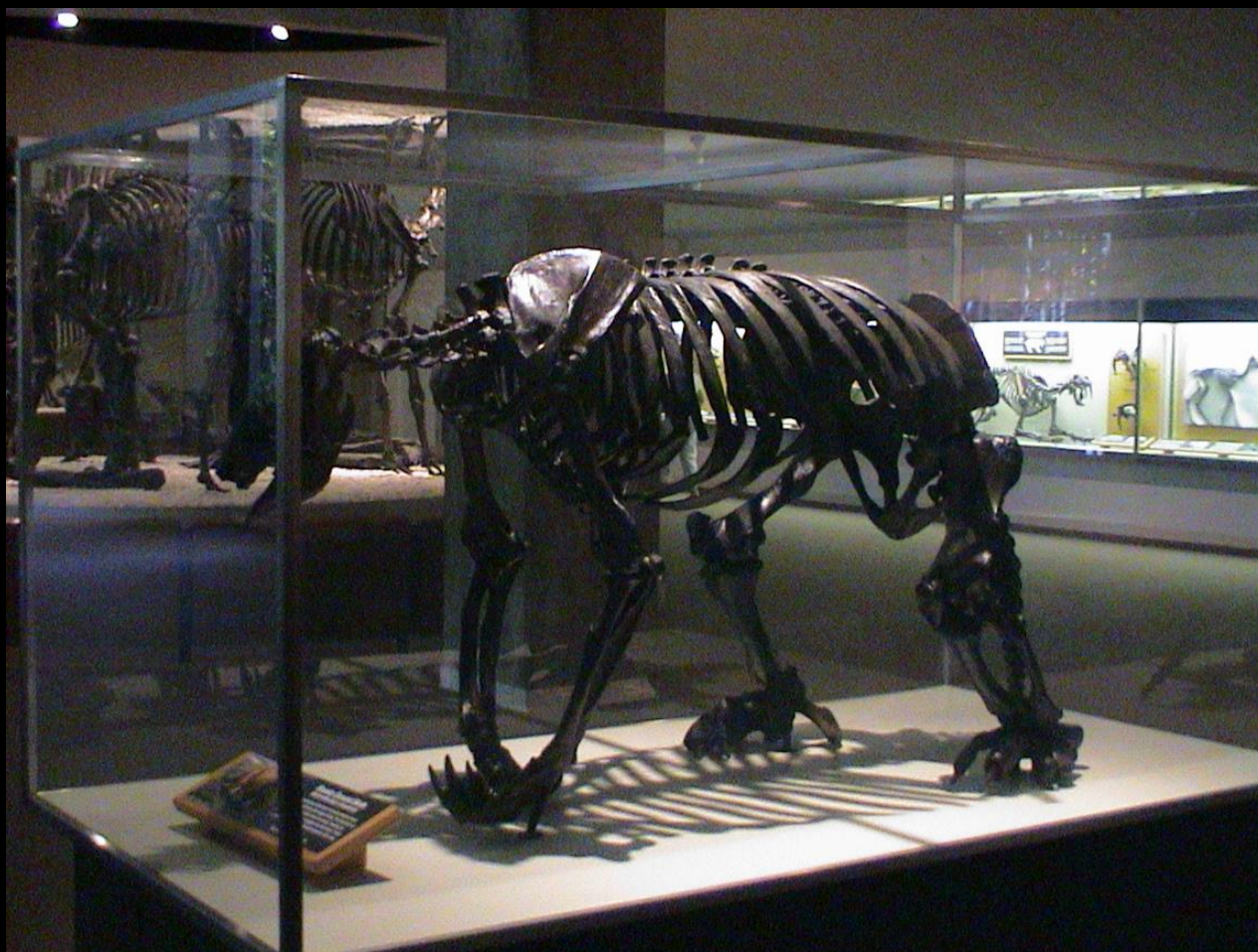


Shasta Ground Sloth

Nothrotheriops shastense

This small ground sloth had a tubular-shaped snout and fewer teeth than the larger sloths. The structure of its teeth suggests that it was a browser, feeding on leaves of shrubs or low-hanging tree branches. Fossil dung found in Arizona and Nevada supports this view.

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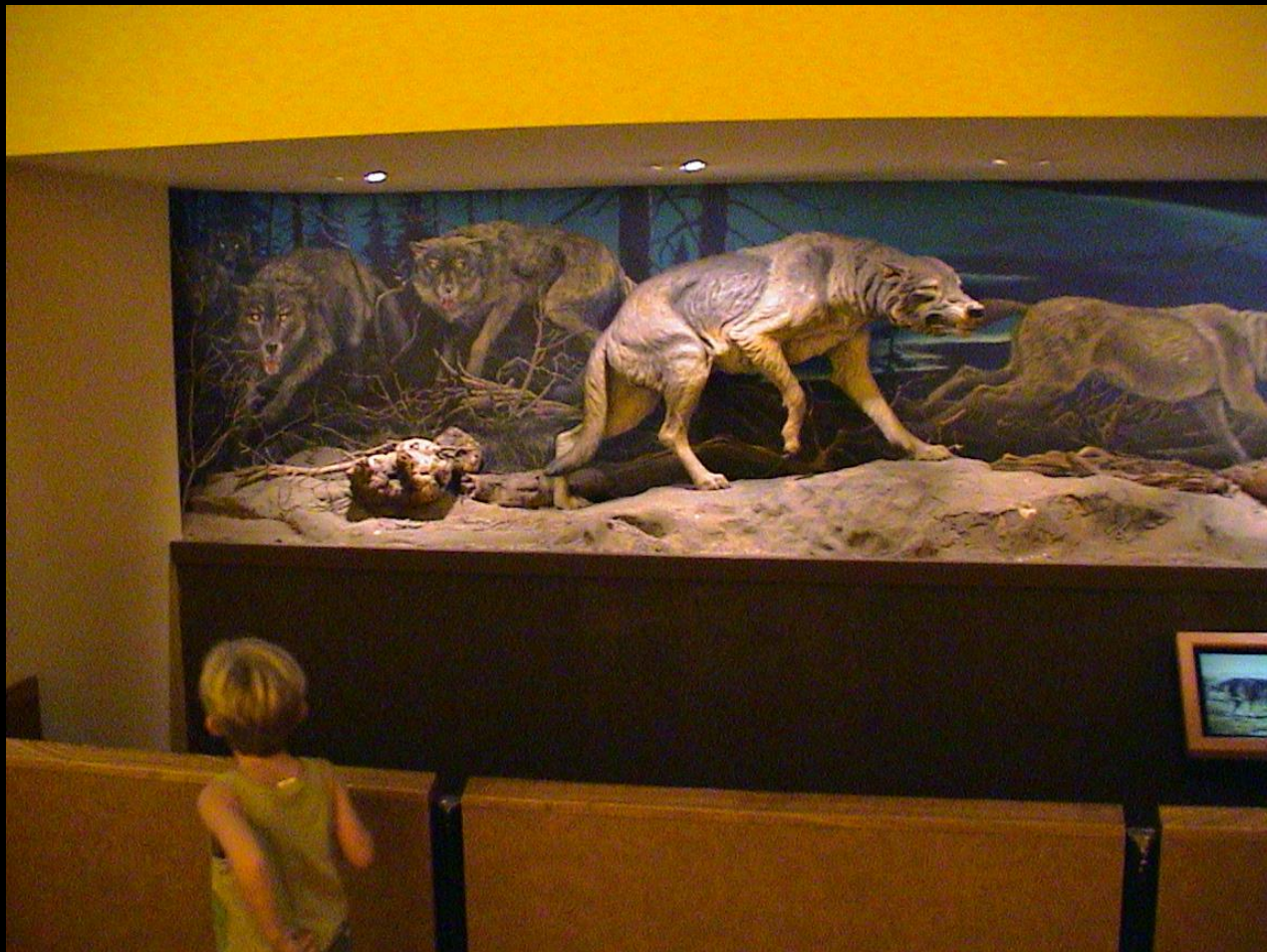
Dire Wolf *Canis dirus*

The dire wolf, *Canis dirus*, was a very close relative of the timber wolf, *Canis lupus*. It probably hunted like the timber wolf in packs of from three to over 20 animals. The dire wolf had stronger and more powerful teeth and jaws and could bring down an animal as large as a bison or camel. However, we believe that much of their diet consisted of small mammals and the kills of other carnivores.

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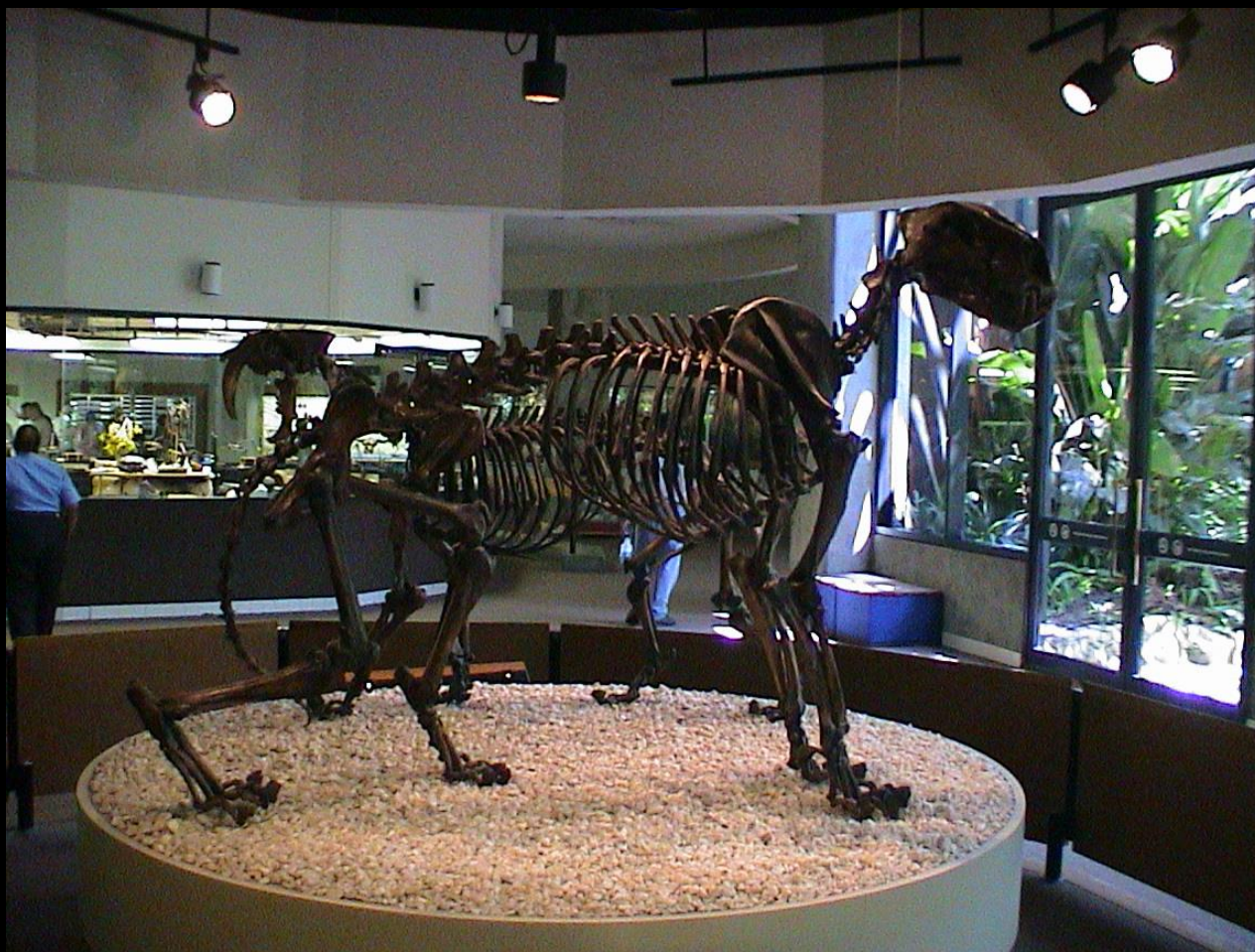




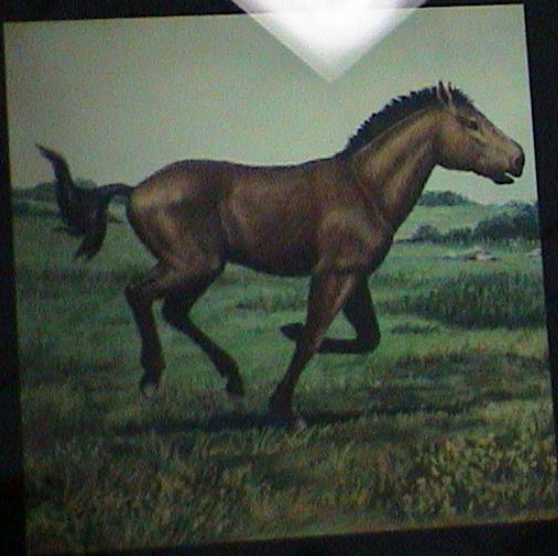
American Lion *Felis atrox*

The American lion was probably the most formidable predator of its time. It was larger than the Indian tiger, the African lion or the California Saber-tooth. Parts of nearly a hundred of these great carnivores were recovered from Rancho La Brea.

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Extinct Western Horse

Equus occidentalis

The horse family has lived in North America for about 50 million years. Beginning with an ancestor only two feet tall, horses have increased in size and diversity throughout their long history. They migrated to Europe, Asia and Africa before becoming extinct in the New World.

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Saber-toothed Cat Family

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Rancho La Brea Time Wall

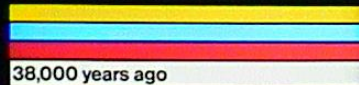
sponsored by: Randiwick Schickler
in Memory of Emory Hall Shover



Each panel of the Rancho La Brea Time Wall represents 2,000 years of history from 38,000 years ago to the present day.

The top portion of each panel discusses Rancho La Brea animals and events, while the bottom shows the major developments in world history at that time.

Follow the red, blue and yellow lines for each animal's line of extinction.



The American Lion, *Panthera leo atrox*, was a large feline that lived in North America from about 100,000 years ago until about 10,000 years ago. It was a member of the Felidae family, like the modern lion and tiger.

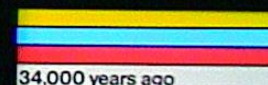
In contrast to the American Lion, the California saber tooth, *Machinistictus*, was a member of the Felidae family, like the modern lion and tiger. It was a member of the Felidae family, like the modern lion and tiger.



Three Red modern dogs, *Canis lupus familiaris*, lived by hunting and gathering food about 36,000 years ago. They were the first of modern dogs, followed by the *Canis lupus familiaris*, the first of modern dogs, followed by the *Canis lupus familiaris*, the first of modern dogs.



Of the over 100 species of birds that lived in Rancho La Brea, the California condor, *Condor*, was the largest. It was a member of the Condor family, like the modern condor. It was a member of the Condor family, like the modern condor.





The American Lion, *Panthera leo*, was proportioned like the modern African lion, but with a more robust build. It was a powerful predator, and its presence in the fossil record suggests it may have been a dominant predator in its ecosystem. Follow the yellow line below for the approximate time of extinction.

In contrast to the American Lion, the California Sabertooth, *Homotherium*, was proportioned like a modern panther and probably inhabited a more temperate environment. Follow the yellow line below for the approximate time of extinction.



Of the over 100 species of birds from Pleistocene, most were large, powerful, and highly intelligent. Many of these birds were found in the same sites as the American Lion and Sabertooth, suggesting they may have been part of the same ecosystem. Follow the yellow line below for the approximate time of extinction.

Follow the blue line below for the approximate time of extinction of the California Sabertooth and the American Lion.



The American Mastodon, *Mastodon*, was a large, powerful, and highly intelligent animal. It was a dominant predator in its ecosystem, and its presence in the fossil record suggests it may have been a dominant predator in its ecosystem. Follow the yellow line below for the approximate time of extinction.

36,000 years ago

These first modern men, Homo sapiens, lived by hunting and gathering from about 40,000 years ago. They were the first to use tools and weapons to hunt and gather food, and they were the first to use fire for cooking and warmth. Follow the yellow line below for the approximate time of extinction.

34,000 years ago

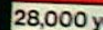
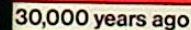
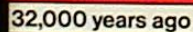



Early human tools

32,000 years ago




Early human settlements






Figures of the Long-Horned Bison, *Bison latifrons*, are rare at
 Pontiac La Poudre. This giant bison is larger than the more common
 American Bison, *Bison bison*, and had a far greater spread of horns.
 Both are larger than the modern bison or buffalo. The remains of
 all North American bison are from Asia. Follow the yellow
 line below for the Long-Horned Bison's approximate time of
 extinction, and follow the blue line for the American Bison's
 approximate time of extinction.





The Short-faced Bear, *Arctodus simus*, was larger than the largest
 modern bear. It lived in North America, and
 is closely related to the spectacled bear of the Andes. Follow the
 yellow line below for the approximate time of this bear's extinction.


The Gray Wolf, *Canis lupus*, was once common all over North
 America, but now it is the largest member of the family.
 Follow the blue line below for the approximate time of its extinction.




One of the most common and most successful mammals
 in North America, the zebra, *Equus*, is closely related to the horse.
 The zebra was once common all over North America, but now it is
 the largest member of the family. Follow the blue line below for the
 approximate time of its extinction.









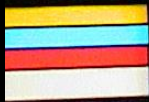


Early bison




Some of the first bison






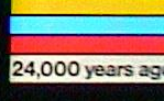
28,000 years ago



26,000 years ago



24,000 years ago





Partial view of mammoth sculpture on the left edge of the exhibit.



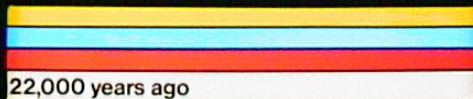
One of the most rare and unusual animals found at Rancho La Brea is the Tapir. Tapirs, living species of this creature are generally restricted to tropical forests and, in the western hemisphere, range from southern Mexico through South America. The Tapir was probably restricted to a mild, broad coastal zone during the Ice Age. Follow the blue line below for the approximate time of its extinction.



Native American figure sculpture.



The long-necked, long-legged Shasta's Llama, a prehistoric animal, is related to the living South American llama. Very few were found at Rancho La Brea. Follow the blue line below for the approximate time of its extinction.



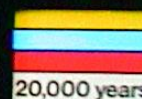
The Extinct Camel, Camelops hesternus, was similar to the modern domesticated camel of southern Asia. The fact that camels, introduced to North America in the late century, found no native western rivals such as mammoths and mastodons has led to their being called the "American camel." Follow the blue line below for the approximate time of its extinction.



Native American figure sculpture.



Partial view of mammoth sculpture on the right edge of the exhibit.



Native American figure sculpture.



is similar to the modern
art that dramatizes,
Hart, found small
works built entirely to
Exhibit Canal
the approximate time



The Extinct Western Horse, Equus occidentalis, disappeared at
least eight thousand years prior to European colonization of the
Americas. When the Spanish brought the modern horse to the
new world, it adapted readily to its new environment. It is,
therefore, difficult to understand why the Western Horse died
out in the first place. Follow the blue line below for its
approximate time of extinction.



The pig-like Flat-headed Peccary, Platygonus, was larger bodied
and longer armed than today's relatives found in Central and
South America. It is rare at Rancho La Brea and is believed to have
been primarily an open plain or prairie dweller. Follow the red line
below for the Peccary's approximate time of extinction.

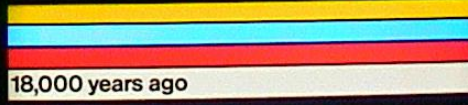
The Dwarf Proatherium Antelope, Camerotoxus, was ranged
throughout western North America from the Rocky Mountains
south to Mexico. It is better known by its modern name, the
Antelope, which is the true name of the animal. Follow the blue
line below for the Proatherium's approximate time of extinction.



The Imperial Mammoth, Mammuthus imperator, was the largest
mammoth that ever lived. It is better known by its modern name,
the Mammoth, which is the true name of the animal. Follow the
blue line below for the Mammoth's approximate time of extinction.



20,000 years ago



18,000 years ago



16,000 years ago



16,000 years ago



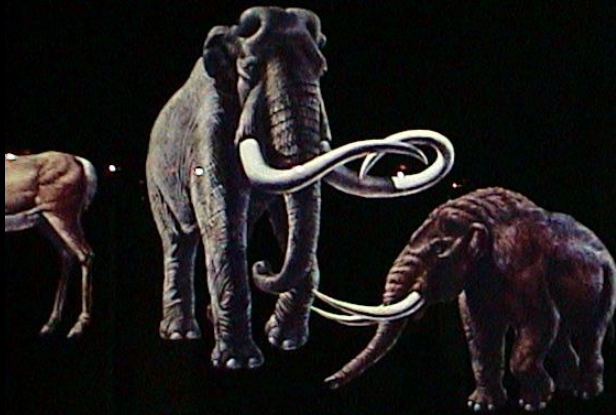
16,000 years ago



Some of man's first art works are the cave paintings found in France and Spain.



16,000 years ago



Always extinct, ranged
in the Rocky Mountains
and only slightly
into Asia. Follow the blue
line to extinction.

The Imperial Mammoth, *Mammuthus imperator*, was primarily a
grazer. Fossil finds reflect its preference for open rather than
forested country. Follow the blue line below for the mammoth's
approximate time of extinction.

The American Mastodon, *Mammuthus americanus*, occupied
northern and eastern forests or woodlands characterized by
spruce and evergreen trees. In the southwest, it was restricted
to coastal regions or mountain forests. Follow the red line
below for the mastodon's approximate time of extinction.



By organizing group hunts, pre-agricultural man was able to
attack large mammals and small herds with much success. The
hunters would then take what they wanted and leave the rest of
the kill to scavengers. The question is, was this practice a
factor in the extinction of some of the animals found at
Rancho La Brea?



Most species of the mammoth
and mastodon
were distributed in central
and eastern North America
including present-day



16,000 years ago



14,000 years ago



12,000 years ago



Early stone tools



The most advanced stone age tools



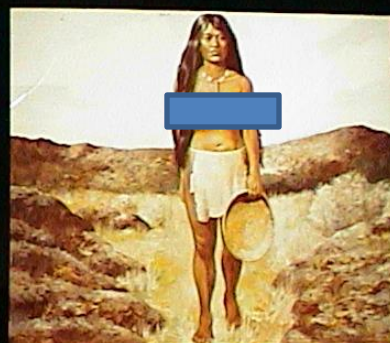
The first bow hunting



The end of the world

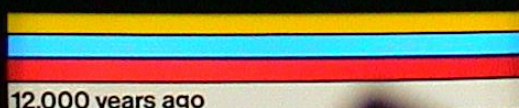


Warm areas of the southwest were covered with inland lakes. A 600-foot deep lake existed where Death Valley is today. When the lakes disappeared as a result of climatic change, the habitats of many animals including man were severely disrupted.



The remains of only one human, 25-30 years of age, have been found in the area. The structure of her skull indicates that she was related to the Channel Island Indians. This is the way La Brea woman may have appeared.

Over 2000 years ago, the Channel Island Indians lived in the area. They were very skilled at...



12,000 years ago



10,000 years ago

8,000





Over 240 Coyotes, Canis latrans, have been recovered from Rancho La Brea, making them the third most abundant mammal found. Other small animals such as badgers, skunks, rabbits and many kinds of rodents also survive to the present day.



With only a few exceptions, all lizards, frogs, snakes, turtles and snakes found as fossils at Rancho La Brea are in California today. Among these is the western rattlesnake, Crotalus oreganus.



8,000 years ago



6,000 years ago





With only a few exceptions, all fish, frogs, lizards, snakes, turtles and snakes found as fossils at Rancho La Brea live in California today. Among these is the western rattlesnake, *Crotalus viridis*.



These artifacts recovered from Rancho La Brea give us a general idea of the culture of the local Indians.

Croquet staves are unique to southern California. The fact that some of them found at other sites were inscribed with symbols in a pictorial style may account for the ones found in the pits. We can only guess that they were used in some ceremonial way.

This wood spear tip may have been imbedded in the flesh of a



wounded animal that became trapped in the asphalt. It is about 4,000 years old by the Carbon 14 method.

Parts of what may have been a necklace include a shell ornament and shaped bone pendants.

This bone and wood spatula were probably used in many different tasks and cooking. Wood artifacts of this exceptional quality and age are very rare.

6,000 years ago



First use of bronze



Pyramids of Egypt



4,000 years ago



First use of iron



Greece



Rome

2,000



















