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ABSTRACT BOOK



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The carnivore guild of Bolt's Farm, South Africa: Carnivore biodiversity in the Plio-Pleistocene

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The fossil locality of Bolt's Farm is a system of numerous fossil deposits spanning the Plio-Pleistocene. The carnivore guild represented from these loci range from small bodied carnivores to an as yet unidentified giant felid. Here we examine the identified carnivore species from the various fossil deposits to date and discuss biodiversity and possible palaeoecological implications for each deposit. Current research has focused on 12 fossil deposits, 11 of which have identified carnivore material; Aves Cave I, Aves Cave II, Brad Pit A, Brad Pit B, Bridge Cave, Cobra Cave, Femur Dump, Garage Ravine Cave, Milo A, Waypoint and X Cave. Families represented include Mustelidae, Herpestidae, Canidae, Hyaenidae and Felidae. Felidae is further broken down to Machairondontinae, *Felis* and *Panthera*. Hyaenidae is comprised of *Crocota*, *Proteles*, *Hyaenid* and *Chasmaporthetes*. Canidae has material assigned to *Canis* and *Vulpes*. While some deposits have thus far yielded few carnivore fossils, such as Garage Ravine Cave (1), Waypoint (1), Aves Cave II (2), Cobra Cave (2) and Brad Pit B (5). Other deposits have fewer than 100 carnivore remains (Femur Dump (31), Aves Cave I (81), Brad Pit A (53) and X Cave (25)). Carnivores are only identified at Milo B by the presence of a hyaenid coprolite. The Bridge Cave deposit has over 300 carnivore specimens that are dominated by material from large bodied felids. Similarly the material from Femur Dump is dominated by material from *Dinofelis barlowi*. Aves Cave I has the most diverse set of carnivore taxa to date. Compared to many other fossil deposits within the Cradle of Humankind, the deposits at Bolt's Farm have a higher number of *Panthera* fossils when compared to other carnivore species. Here we look at the identified remains to date and compare them with the carnivore assemblages of other fossil deposits in the region.

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