

## Pleistocene (Ice-Age) Mammals

Between 1.8 and about 11,000 years ago the earth went through a series of colder climates when much of North America was covered by glaciers. This period is referred to as the Ice Ages or Pleistocene period of geologic time. Although Arkansas was not covered by ice, many large mammals lived here. Many groups of animals are represented by species living today and species that are now extinct. Examples of now extinct elephants are mastodons and woolly mammoths, wolves such as the dire wolf and cats like the saber tooth.

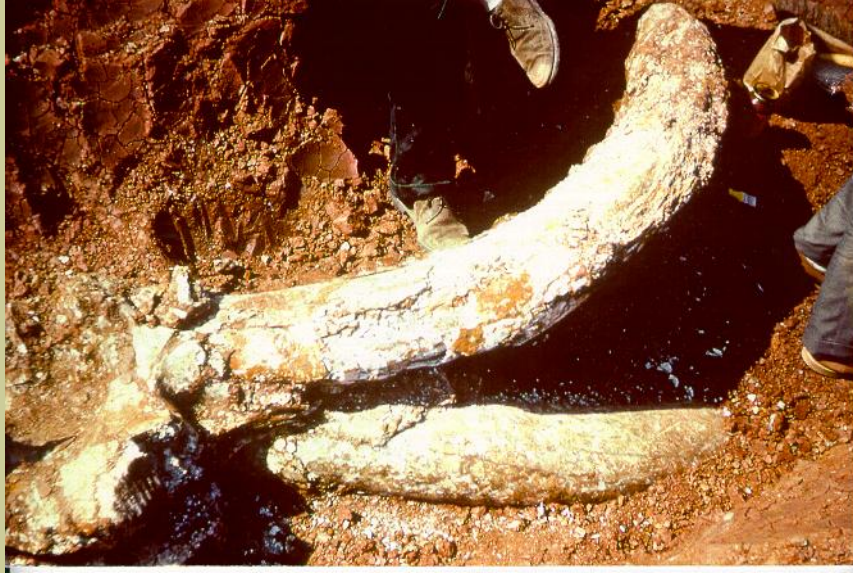
### **Mammoth and mastodons**

*Mammuthus columbi*  
Pleistocene

This is a tooth of the North American mammoth. Unlike the woolly mammoth which was adapted to cold climates this elephant lived in temperate regions. It is likely that the saber-toothed cat and the dire wolf saw this animal as prey.



Below is a picture of mammoth tusks and teeth exposed during the excavation of a borrow pit for construction of Interstate 40, near Hazen Arkansas. The remains are housed at the University of Arkansas Collections Facility in Fayetteville, Arkansas.



Mastodon femur  
Pleistocene

This is the thigh bone of a mastodon, an elephant-like creature which roamed various parts of the state maybe as recently as 12,000 years ago. Mastodons were somewhat smaller than modern elephants, standing about nine feet high.



- Puma/Cougar

### **Saber-tooth cat**

*Smilodon californicus*  
Pleistocene

These cats were short limbed and were probably slow runners. The saber-toothed adaptation appears to have been specialization for feeding on large prey, possibly as a scavenger. The saber-toothed cat became extinct about 12,000 years ago at about the same time as many of the large herbivores of the Pleistocene epoch. Remains of saber-toothed cats have been found at a few sites in north Arkansas.





A saber tooth cat tooth from the Conard Fissure, Newton County. From *Fossils of Arkansas* by Tom Freeman.