



TWO HOMININ SPECIES: PRE HISTORY

NEWS: Footprints of two ancient hominin species found at the same spot in Kenya

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Researchers discovered 1.5-million-year-old fossilised footprints in Kenya, revealing the coexistence of **Homo erectus** and **Paranthropus boisei** during the Pleistocene Epoch. The findings highlight their distinct ecological roles and provide unique insights into human evolution.

Discovery of Fossilised Footprints in Kenya

Location and Era:

- Fossilised footprints were unearthed near the shore of an ancient lake in present-day Kenya.
- These date back 1.5 million years, placing them in the Pleistocene Epoch.

Significance:

- This discovery is crucial as it provides direct evidence of the coexistence of two distinct hominin species in the same region during this period.

Details of the Footprints

Species Identified: The footprints were attributed to two hominin species:

1. **Homo erectus:**

- An ancestor of modern humans.
- Adapted to a diet involving hunting and meat consumption.

2. **Paranthropus boisei:**

- A robust hominin species.
- Specialized in consuming tough vegetation.

Preservation:

- Found on soft sediment near a lakeshore, these footprints were well-preserved, offering a rare snapshot of hominin movements and interactions in their natural environment.

Insights from the Footprints

Behavioural Information:



- Unlike fossilized bones, footprints reveal dynamic behaviours, such as gait, posture, and movement patterns.
- Both species exhibited bipedal locomotion, indicating upright walking.

Ecological Roles:

- These species occupied different ecological niches, showcasing a division of dietary adaptations.
- The coexistence highlights the diversity in survival strategies within the hominin lineage.



Implications for Human Evolution

Complex Evolutionary Path:

- The findings underscore the complexity of human evolution, with multiple species existing and adapting simultaneously.
- This paints a more intricate picture of evolutionary pressures and survival strategies.

Divergent Fates:

- **Homo erectus:** Contributed to the lineage of modern humans and had a longer evolutionary timeline.
- **Paranthropus boisei:** Eventually went extinct, highlighting the variable success of different adaptations.

Source : <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/science-for-all-footprints-of-two-ancient-hominin-species-found-at-the-same-spot-in-kenya/article68946757.ece>