

Wallabies and Wombats: the zooarchaeology of ice age Tasmania

Dr Jillian Garvey

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Zooarchaeology studies the faunal remains from archaeological assemblages and uses them to interpret human behaviour and their interaction with the environment. This seminar will discuss current research on the zooarchaeological record from southwest Tasmania (spanning 35,000-10,000 years ago), one of the world's richest late Pleistocene sequences with densities of up to 250,000 bones in less than a cubic metre of sediment excavated. A limited number of human prey species are found in the deposits with the Bennett's wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*) and the Common wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*) dominating. Current research includes growth-increment teeth (skeletochronology) studies to determine the season and age-of-death of the Bennett's wallaby. This allows the examination of human subsistence patterns, land use and prey selection before, during, and after the Last Glacial Maximum. Other research uses modern wallabies and wombats to investigate their 'economic anatomy' and nutritional value via utility indices, bone density and analysis of the bone marrow and meat. This provides an important analogue for interpreting faunal patterns in the zooarchaeological record. Finally, natural pit fall palaeontological assemblages from southwest Tasmania are being studied to both understand the distribution and abundance of animals during the late Pleistocene, and to examine megafaunal extinction in this region.



Wednesday 1 October 2008
12.05 - 1pm

Zoology Seminar Room
Room 350, Biol Sciences 1

All welcome

Dr Jillian Garvey is currently a La Trobe Postdoctoral Fellow in the Archaeology Program at La Trobe University, having completed from her PhD in the Department of Zoology at La Trobe in 2005. This PhD examined the vertebrate fauna, trace fossil, geology and taphonomy of an Early Carboniferous fossil fish locality near Mansfield, Victoria. This zoological training is being applied to her current research which uses the faunal record to investigate human behaviour and adaptation, and the palaeoecology of southwest Tasmania during the Last Glacial Maximum.

For further information about the seminar series contact:

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<http://www.zoo.latrobe.edu.au/Seminar/seminars.html>