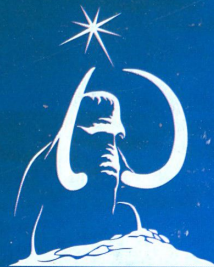


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## SOTTINTSY WOOLLY RHINOCEROS

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In summer 2004, the schoolchildren of the Sottintsy secondary school (Ust-Aldansky Region, Yakutia) discovered a mandible branch and some other bones of woolly rhinoceros on the Lena River right bank. The find site is situated 10 km to the North of the Sottintsy settlement in a steep bank slope. In this area, the right bank of the Lena is represented by the so called Bestyakh terrace stretching to many kilometers with varying heights from 12 to 30 m. The bone remains were deposited at the depth of 7.4-7.8 m in grey fine-grained sands of the 15-meter high terrace. Those sediments presumably belonged to the end of the Kazantsevan interstadial of the Late Pleistocene.

Thus, excavations conducted by P.A. Lazarev's team and schoolchildren yielded the most part of the skeleton of woolly rhino consisting of mandible, spine fragment, sacrum, hip bone, most limb bones, and 33 ribs removed from frozen soils. The skeleton of the Sottintsy woolly rhinoceros is the third find in Yakutia which emphasizes its great scientific value.

The skull and other missing skeleton fragments probably dropped out of the burial stratum and were taken away by river stream during spring tide. The mandible remained entirely right branch being broken in the incisive area. The bone is of light-brown colour, weakly mineralized. There are five teeth in alveole of each branch with second premolars missing. P3, P4, M1 are strongly worn out evidencing adult age of the specimen. Axial blade of the left scapula bears well discerned bulge evidencing possibly osseous disease. Right side of the pelvis is intact while the left one has a broken huckle-bone. Limb bones of the Late Pleistocene woolly rhinoceros as well as cervical and thoracic vertebrae and sacrum are of average size. 18 left and 15 right ribs remained while the Churapcha rhinoceros remains had only 16 pairs.

Morphological peculiarities and size of bones suggest that the Sottintsy woolly rhino belonged to *Coelodonta antiquitatis antiquitatis* Blum. subspecies. It should be noted that woolly rhinoceros was most common in the Lena-Aldan Interfluvium of Central Yakutia. Two other well-known rhinoceros skeletons from the Churapcha and Mamontovaya gora Sites were also discovered in that area.