

Teenage woolly rhino still fed on mother's milk when it died in Pleistocene era

By Anna Liesowska and Svetlana Skarbo

19 November 2021 Siberian Times

<https://siberiantimes.com/other/others/news/worlds-best-preserved-teenage-woolly-rhino-still-feeding-on-mothers-milk-when-it-died-in-pleistocene-era/>

Scientists share first results on the world's best-preserved extinct rhino that lived in Yakutia at least 20,000 years ago.



World's best-preserved teenage woolly rhino was still feeding on mother's milk when it died in Pleistocene era. Picture: The Siberian Times

The uniquely preserved teenage woolly rhino with even its brain intact was found in Arctic Yakutia in August 2020. The extinct rhino with a full coat of thick hazel-colored hair, a horn, and a complete set of teeth **was discovered by a group of mammoth tusk hunters in permafrost deposits** beside the Tirekhtyakh River.

This week the group of scientists shared the first exciting results of studies they carried on the rhino.



100% of the profits from the sale of this image will be donated to the International Rhino Foundation.





The uniquely preserved teenage woolly rhino with even its brain intact was found in Arctic Yakutia in August 2020. Pictures: The Siberian Times

Intriguingly, the adolescent was still sucking its mother's milk while having a 'normal' grass diet, too.

'The back side of its horn was noticeably worn out. We believe the horn was getting rubbed against its mother's tummy each time it knelt down to suckle'.

'The front of the horn was quite worn out, too, because the rhino used it to dig soil and snow to search for food. This is similar to the modern rhinoceros, when mothers feed their calves for up to two years,' said Dr Valery Plotnikov, from the Department for Study of Mammoth Fauna at Yakutia's Academy of Sciences.

'Intensive feeding led to the horn getting worn out, and rubbed. We see the same on the baby woolly rhino called Sasha, the world's only preserved baby woolly rhino.'

'It's nasal and forehead horns are almost totally worn out. We believe it was due to the fact that the baby was breastfed and was rubbing its horns against the mother's belly', Dr Plotnikov added.



Как видно из примеров
у современных носорогов
лактация длится
довольно продолжительное
время

Детеныш шерстистого
носорога «Саша»



Реконструкция

Вид сверху



Передняя
часть

10 см

Задняя
часть

Вид сбоку



10 см

Вид спереди



10 см

Реконструкция расположения рогов без масштаба





Схема стирания зубов по Гарутт Н.В. (1998)



Вид на букальную поверхность



Вид на мезиальную поверхность

Scientists share first results on juvenile hairy rhinoceros that lived in Siberian region Yakutia at least 20,000 years ago - pictures show worn-out horn on a baby woolly rhino (Sasha), found in Yakutia several years ago; the horn of the teenage rhino found last summer, and one of the teenage rhino's premolars. Pictures: Valery Plotnikov

'The adolescent woolly rhino's body is approximately 231 centimetres long, which is around one metre less than an adult animal. The height at the withers is around 109 centimetres', Dr. Gennady Boeskorov from Yakutia's Academy of Sciences told The Siberian Times.

The rhino who must have been between three and five years old when it died was 'extremely well-fed' with even a hump of fat, the scientists said.

It could have been hunted by predators into water, where it drowned at least 20,000 years ago.

The more exact date of when the rhino lived will be received via the radiocarbon analyses.





This week the group of scientists shared the first exciting results of studies they carried on the rhino; pictures show scientists by the teenage woolly rhino, and close ups of the rhino's hair on its stomach, leg, and ear. Pictures: The Siberian Times, Valery Plotnikov

The rhino's hair was very well-preserved too, with layers of thick hair on its belly and long guard hair all over its body - even on the ear, making it fully-equipped for winter time.

'It's great to have samples of extinct woolly rhinoceros at different stages of their lives.

'We have the calf, we have adult animals, both male and female, and now we have a teenager.

'We are happy to study them and share the results with the world.'

The report was presented at the International conference 'Quaternary Paleontology and Paleoecology of Yakutia', held in Yakutsk, Republic of Sakha, in November 2021.

Sasha, the world's only baby rhino, found in Yakutia in 2014; the rhino lived some 34,000 years ago. Pictures: The Siberian Times



