

## THE PREHISTORIC FAUNA OF SABARAGAMU BASIN

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The Pleistocene is a geological time period which commenced 2 -1.67 million before present about 12,000-10,000 years before present. During this period most parts of the Northern Hemisphere were covered with glaciers creating a cooler climate. Due to this glacial formation the main sea level was much lower than today. The low sea levels facilitated the connection of Sri Lanka with the Indian mainland with land bridge. Therefore, a number of mega and micro fauna was able to cross to Sri Lanka from India. It is believed that the last inter connection was made 7500yrs BP. During the Pleistocene, Sri Lanka experienced heavy rain fall and the entire island was covered with rain forests. These heavy showers created large lakes and marshes in the Sabaragamuwa basin providing habitats for a number of marsh loving mammals and other animals. However at the end of Pleistocene the climate changed resulting in the extinction of a number of animals.

Pleistocene fauna in Sri Lanka known as Ratanapura fauna. The Ratnapura

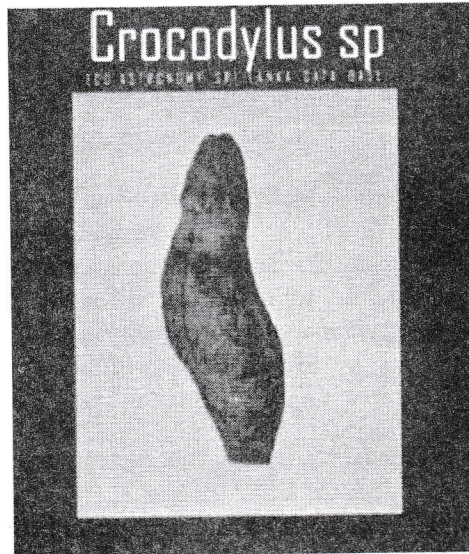
fauna comprise fossils of middle Pleistocene, upper Pleistocene, and sub recent animals up by re-deposition. Fossilised teeth and bones belonging to Pleistocene fauna are found at present in gem pits and gem gravels (illama). Fossils can also be found in cave deposits where Balangoda man once lived. These fossils are of animals brought for consumption or other needs. A majority of the fossils have been recorded within the Sabaragamuwa basin and few have been found outside the area where gem gravel occurs. These fossils have been in this alluvial plain which is a landform created by the deposition of sediment over a long period by one or more rivers coming from highland regions. There could be animals that bodies had washed into the ocean over a long period of time or decayed owing to the influence of natural elements.

There are no early records of fossils from Sri Lanka although the occurrence of bones in the gem gravel was known to Sri Lankan gem miners. However in 1935 first collection was accordingly taken by P.E.P

Deraniyagala . The fossils that P.E.P Deraniyagala were collected name as follows Leo Sinhaleyus, Rinoceros, Merycopotamus Sinhaleyus, Hexaprotodon Sinhaleyus, Hypselephas hysudricus sinhaleyus, Elephas maximus sinhaleyus and the concept of Pre historic occur as a subject. Therefore in 2004 DR. Sheran Deraniyagala excavate fossils in Ratnapura area and examine them in a wide angle.

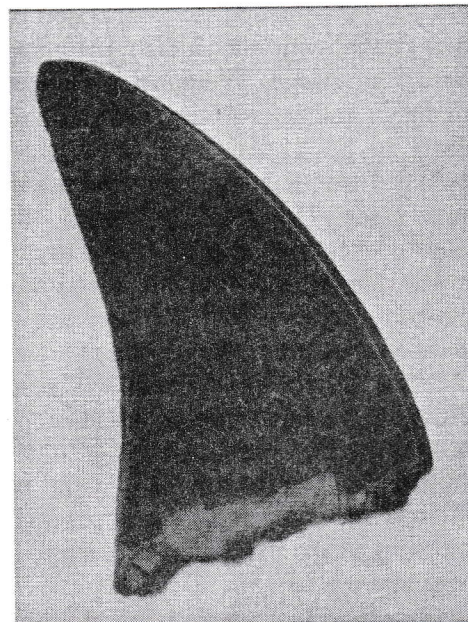
As primary data collection we used "The Pleistocene of Ceylon" by P.E.P Deraniyagala and "Spolia Zeyalanica" by P.E.P deraniyagala. As secondary data collection we went to gem pits and collected the bone fossils and identification was done. Therefore we found fossils of Rhinoceros, Sambur, Crocodile ,Tiger , Lion and Gaur. By identify theses fossils we were able to understand geological surrounding in kuruwita area and we were able to understand the habitats of balanagoda man.

**1. *Crocodylus* sp. | Oder-Crocodilea**  
Location -Khengama,Ovita Kumbura, Kuruwita| March 2013 [Measurements are available]



**2. *Panthera tigris* or *Panthera leo sinhaleyus***

Lower ,right caine tooth  
Location - Galukagama Maha Ela,Puwakattaovita,Kiruwita|  
2008[Measurements are available]



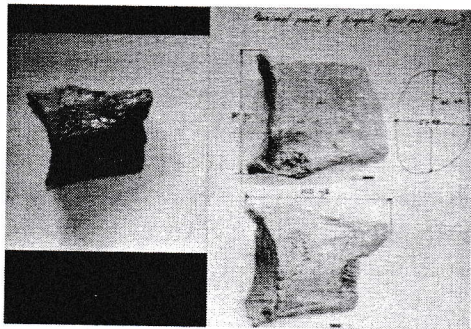
3. *Rusa Unicolor*-Right mandible, outer or ducal expects with 2preolars and 2 molars.

Location-Edandawela, Kuruwita, 2007  
[Measurements are available]



4. *Rhinoceros Sinhaleyus*- Prximal portion of Scapula

Location Kuruwita paradies-2001[Measurements are available]

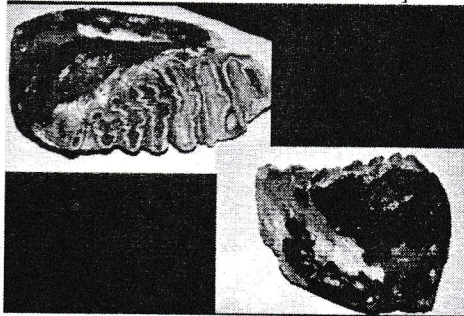


5 *Bibos sinhaleyus*-Bovine Vertebra  
Location- Ovita Kumbura, Khenagaa West Kuruwita,[ 20 feet below]-2005



6. *Elephas maximus sinhaleyus*

Location-Kalukagaa,ma weeKubura,Kuruwita-1993[measurements are available]



As Eco Astronomy organization we have planned to exhibits these fossils collection by opening a separate museum with the help of provincial council. This project supervised by Mr. Pathmakumara Jayasinghe [Reasearch Sicientist (Geologist) at Laboratory,Centural Culural Fund] .

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