

## *Myiodon harlani* from La Grande, Oregon

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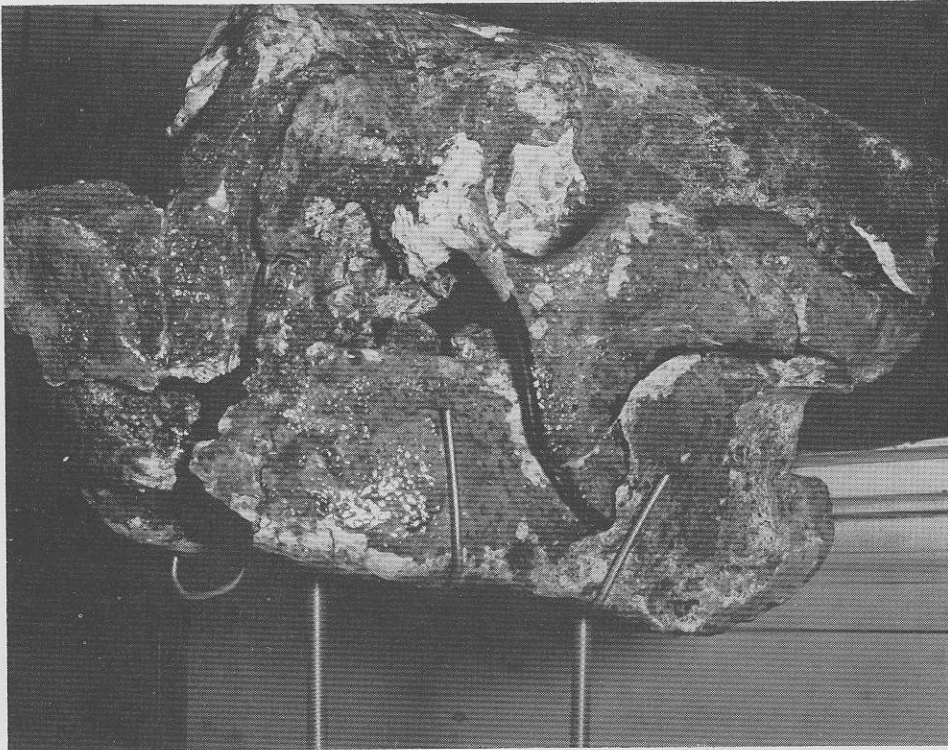
IN OCTOBER, 1964, a fossil *Myiodon* skull, somewhat battered, but fairly complete, was found in a gravel pit two miles south-southeast of La Grande, Oregon, at lat.  $45^{\circ} 17' 47''$  N, long.  $118^{\circ} 04'$  W. It was found in a sandy deposit about seven feet below the contour of the undisturbed material as projected out over the open quarry. Parts of a scapula, a loose caniniform tooth, and parts of radius and ulna and foot fragments including claws were found here. As the skull was cleaned, a tough cemented portion next to the facial bones revealed small, dermal ossicles of calcium carbonate, indicating that the skin had apparently deteriorated in place. Between the inner and outer tables of the cranial bones is a labyrinth of small chambers. It was difficult to get precise measurements to compare with Rancho La Brea specimens tabulated in Stock (1925). However, the approximate measurements fall within those for *Myiodon harlani*. For example, the length from the anterior margin of the maxillary to the posterior end of the occipital condyle (missing) is about 455.0 mm; the depth of the ramus between the third and the fourth inferior teeth is approximately 92.5 mm; the greatest depth of the lower jaw is 181.0 mm. Our specimen shows the shovel-shaped symphysis of the lower jaw.

After correspondence with major museums in the Northwest, as well as at the University of California, I have not yet found any records of an almost complete *Myiodon* skull from the Pacific Northwest. The few fragments discovered in the Pacific Northwest consist of a tooth here, a jaw ramus there, an unguis phalanx or phalanges, caudal vertebrae, or a humerus.

The earliest record of ground sloths in Western North America was a tooth and a humerus found in 1842 at a depth of 12 feet in an old river terrace of the Willamette Valley, near Eugene. According to Stock (1925: 199), J. Leidy referred these to *Myiodon harlani*.

Cope in 1878, on the basis of fragmentary specimens at Fossil Lake (seven miles northeast of Christmas Lake), established a species, *Myiodon sodalis*, which Lull has considered as synonymous with *M. harlani*, according to Stock (1925: 195).

Stock (1925: pl. 46) presents a photograph of a replica of footprints assigned to *Myiodon harlani*, found in a Pleistocene deposit at the Nevada State Penitentiary, Carson City, Nevada.



*Mylodon harlani* skull from La Grande, Oregon. Note shovel-shaped symphysis at anterior end of lower jaw (at left of picture). Reminiscent of India in shape, the deep ventral process of the zygomatic arch extends over the ramus.

In 1901, Miss Anne Alexander collected ground-sloth material at Fossil Lake, Oregon. These parts were a first phalanx, the second digit of the manus, a third metatarsal, and two caudal vertebrae (Stock, 1925: 196).

A right ramus of *Mylodon*, shown in Stock (1925: 196), came from Button Ranch near Christmas Lake, Oregon. Incidentally, this was a large jaw—the depth of the ramus measured between the third and fourth inferior teeth is 105.7 mm.

Hay (1927: 8) reported seeing a *Mylodon* tooth from Roseburg, Oregon, in a collection in the Portland City Hall. In addition Hay mentions that the distal end of a humerus and the distal end of a femur of *Mylodon* from near Roseburg, Oregon, are (cat. No. 3000) in the United States National Museum.

The only verified *Mylodon* material recorded by Hay in the state of Washington are astragali and other foot bones from Delight, about 12 miles north of Washtucna Lake, Adams County.

The La Grande skull and associated bones are at present at Eastern Oregon College. In 1965, material was sent to the Smithsonian for carbon dating. When the age is determined, it will be reported.

### *Literature Cited*

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- Stock, C. 1925. Cenozoic gravigrade edentates of western North America with special reference to the Pleistocene Megalonychinae and Mylodontidae of Rancho La Brea. *Carnegie Inst. Washington. Publication No. 331*: 1-206, pls. 1-46.