

Habitat preferences of European Middle Miocene omnivorous ursids

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Indarctos spp. were the first large-bodied bears with omnivorous tendencies. Two *Indarctos* fossils assigned to *I. arctoides* ssp. by Bernor, Feibel, et al. (2003) and Viranta and Werdelin (2003) show that the genus had a wide geographic range in Europe in the Middle Miocene and was represented by at least two contemporaneous species. Present work shows that the two species of *Indarctos* lived in a mixture of environments, and were not clearly separated into distinct habitats. *Indarctos* seems to have evolved during an interval of faunal turnover in Europe. The appearance of *Indarctos* coincided with an extinction of small omnivorous mammals and was accompanied by the appearance of other large omnivores.

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