

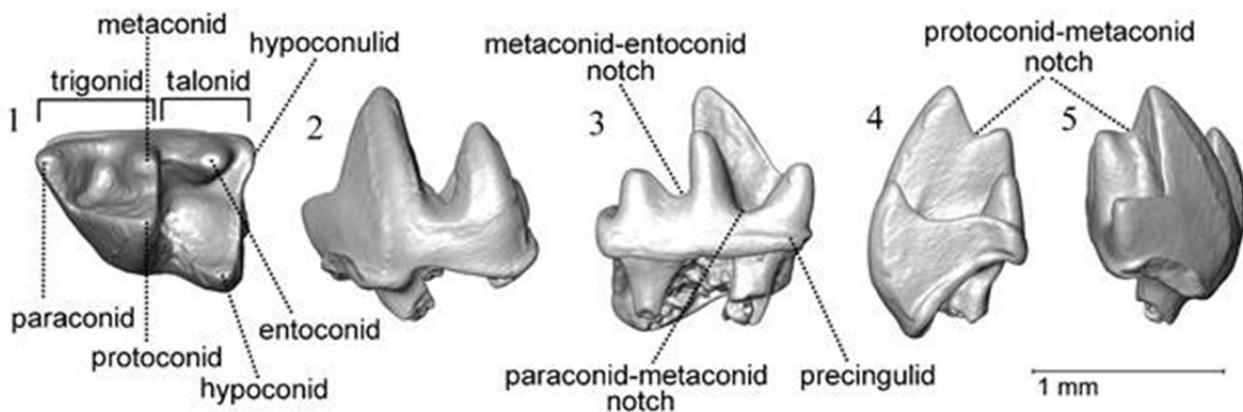


Treeshrew Spotted in Jammu and Kashmir

Why in News?

Recently, Scientists have spotted **fossils of a small mammal resembling squirrels called treeshrew (known as *Sivatupaia ramnagarensis*)** belonging to a **new genus and species from Jammu and Kashmir**.

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What are the Key Points Related to Treeshrew?

▪ About:

- This treeshrew currently represents the **oldest record of fossil tupaiids in the Siwaliks**, extending their time range by **2.5-4.0 Million Years** in the region.
 - **Tupaiids** refers to **several species of East Indian and Asiatic insectivores** of the **family Tupaiidae**, somewhat **resembling squirrels in size and arboreal habits**. The nose is long and pointed.
- **Treeshrews** are very rare elements of the fossil record, with only a few species known throughout the entire **Cenozoic era**.
 - **Cenozoic Era** means **66 million years ago until today** or 'recent life'.
 - During this era, **plants and animals look most like those on Earth today**.
 - Periods of the **Cenozoic Era** are **split into even smaller parts** known as **Epochs**.
- Dietary analyses suggest that the new tupaiid was probably adapted for a less mechanically challenging or more fruit eating diet compared to other extant and fossil tupaiids.
 - A **dietary analysis** is a **nutritional assessment** that allows technicians to analyse the **patterns, quantity, and nutritional quality of food consumed** by an individual.

▪ Significance of the Discovery:

- The identification of time **sensitive dental features and species** in the current collection **helps to provide a more precise age estimate for this Ramnagar locality as between 12.7-11.6 Million Years**.

What are Siwalik sediments?

- The **Siwalik** is a **thick sedimentary sequence** forming the youngest mountain belt, **extending throughout the East- West of the foothills of the Himalayas.**
- Siwalik documents the evolution of many mammalian groups from the middle **Miocene Epoch through Pleistocene** including **treeshrews, hedgehogs**, and other small mammals.

Miocene Epoch

- The Miocene Epoch is the period between 23.03 to 5.3 million years ago. It was a time of warmer **global climates.**
- It's notable in that two major ecosystems made their first appearances: **kelp forests and grasslands.** The expansion of grasslands is correlated to a drying of continental interiors as the **global climate first warmed and then cooled.**
- Important Miocene deposits occur in **North and South America, southern Europe, India, Mongolia, East Africa, and Pakistan.**

Pleistocene (Ice Age)

- It is the geological epoch that lasted from about 2,580,000 to 11,700 years ago, spanning the earth's most recent period of **repeated glaciations.**
- **It was during the Pleistocene that the most recent episodes of global cooling, or ice ages, took place.**

[Source: PIB](#)

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