

Extinct giant deer relative found in U.K.

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University College London scientists say DNA tests have identified the closest living relative to the extinct Irish Elk, or giant deer, living in England.

The team tested for DNA and skeletal features to prove the giant deer, which roamed across Europe and Siberia with prehistoric man and is the subject of numerous cave drawings, had DNA in common with the fallow deer, one of the most widespread deer in England since their introduction by the Normans in the 11th century.

Researchers said the study's results, published online by the journal Nature, contradict recent morphological studies that placed the giant deer closer to the living red deer.

The giant deer, or *Megaloceros giganteus*, lived from 400,000 years ago to its extinction 8,000 years ago, scientists said. It reached a shoulder height of around seven feet, with antlers spanning 10 feet.

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