

An early ape shows its hand

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Fossils often have provided important insights into the evolution of humans and our ancestors. Even small fossils, such as bones from the hand or foot can tell us much about our ancestor's and their behavior. Such may be the case with an ape that lived more than nine million years ago.

A study published in the latest journal issue of *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* reports on the structure of the hand of *Hispanopithecus*, a critically important fossil from an ape that lived during the late Miocene of Spain.

While the authors ponder that the fossil may be from a direct ancestor of living great apes (especially the orangutan), Dr. C. Owen Lovejoy, Kent State University Professor of Anthropology, suggests another possibility in his comment on the article published in the same issue.

A preeminent biological anthropologist in the study of human origins, Lovejoy suggests that the fossil may belong to an extinct ape with its own unique locomotor behavior—a special adaptation and unique form of locomotion that left no modern descendants.

Source: Kent State University

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