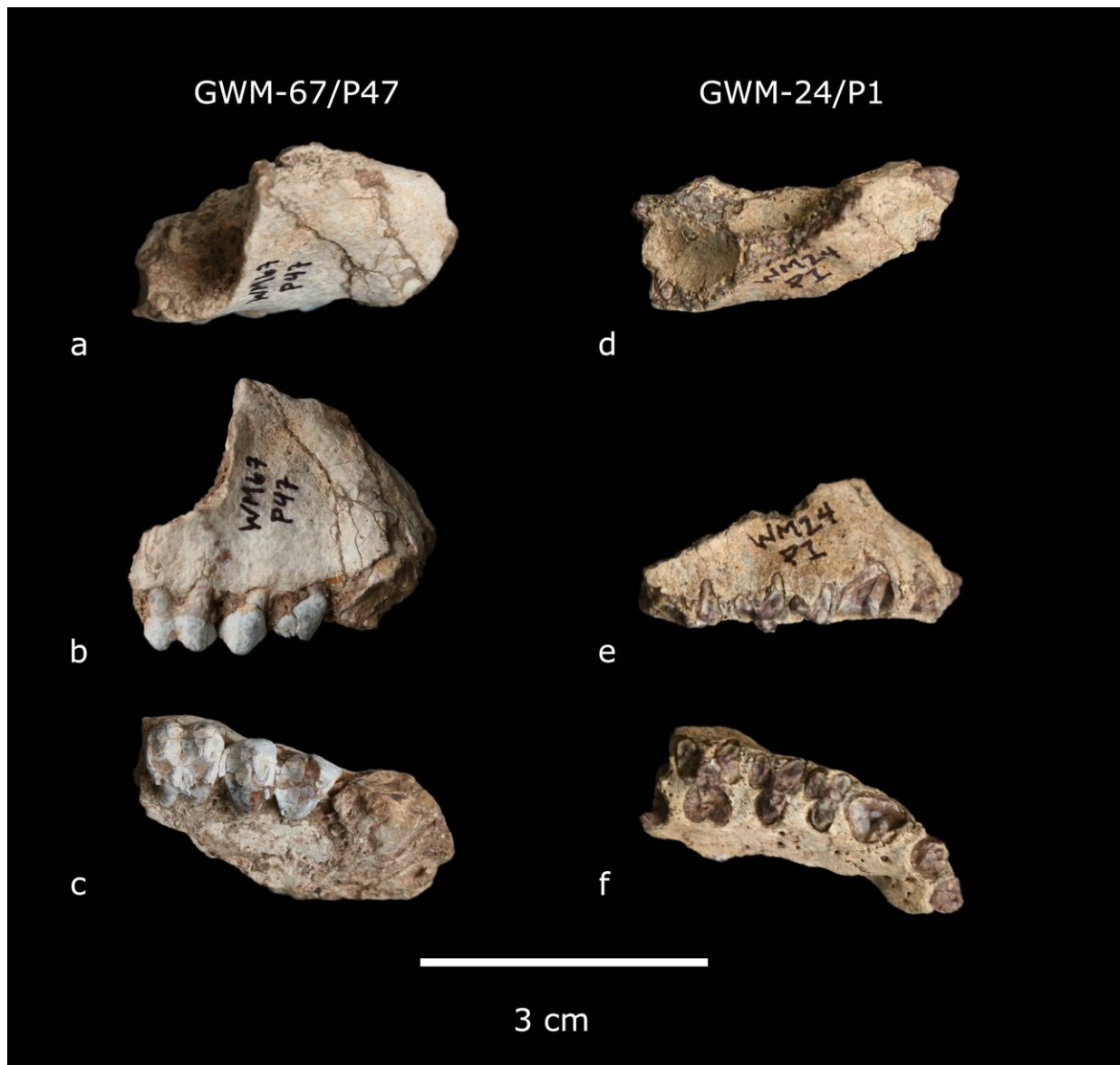


Two new extinct primate species are found in the Ethiopia site of Gona

June 3 2020



Maxillae of *Kuseracolobus aramisi* from Gona. Credit: CENIEH

Sileshi Semaw from the Centro Nacional de Investigación sobre la Evolución Humana (CENIEH), is coauthor of a paper published in the *Journal of Human Evolution* about a large series of fossil cercopithecoid primates named *Pliopapio alemui* and *Kuseracolobus aramisi*, two different new primate species dated between 4.8 and 4.3 million years ago known only from Gona and the Middle Awash study area in Ethiopia.

The [fossil discoveries](#) include upper jaws, mandibles and postcrania found from deposits that also yielded *Ardipithecus ramidus*, a [hominin species](#) first identified in the Middle Awash study area located to the south of Gona. Based on abundance of various animal species, including monkeys, the ancient environment in which *Ardipithecus ramidus* lived was argued to be in a closed habitat with forests.

In addition to providing important information on the biological evolution of monkeys, these fossil discoveries provide critical information about the ancient environment in which *Ardipithecus ramidus* lived. Remarkably, differences in relative abundance of these fossil monkeys showed that at Gona *Ardipithecus ramidus* lived in open wooded habitats, which is different from the closed forested habitat documented in the Middle Awash.

"Therefore, our study shows environmental differences in the areas inhabited by *Ardipithecus ramidus*, one of the earliest hominins that lived at Gona and in the Middle Awash 4.5 million years ago," says Sileshi Semaw.



Mandibles of *Kuseracolobus aramisi* from Gona. Credit: CENIEH

A site of *Ardipithecus*

Gona is one of the two palaeoanthropological sites in Africa where the hominin species known as *Ardipithecus ramidus*) has been discovered. *Ardipithecus ramidus* is among the earliest bipedal hominin species (walking on two feet) that lived in East Africa. Only two other hominin species known as *Ardipithecus kaddaba* (dated to 6.0 million years ago) and *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* (from Tchad in Central Africa dated to 7.0 million years ago) are older than *Ardipithecus ramidus*. Also *Ardipithecus kadabba*, dated to more than 6.0 million years ago, has also been discovered at Gona.

More information: Stephen R. Frost et al. Fossil Cercopithecidae from the Early Pliocene Sagantole Formation at Gona, Ethiopia, *Journal of Human Evolution* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jhevol.2020.102789](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhevol.2020.102789)

Provided by CENIEH

Citation: Two new extinct primate species are found in the Ethiopia site of Gona (2020, June 3) retrieved 2 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2020-06-extinct-primate-species-ethiopia-site.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.