

Research up close and personal

Contemporary witnesses of the Eocene are very important for researchers. Alongside specimens, the exhibition presents research findings and shows their relevance to the present— asking, for example, what we can learn from the past's climate fluctuations and how, precisely, these can be reconstructed. CeNak scientists provide insights into their current work and explain, among other things, how they use fossils to make findings about evolutionary theory and the modern methods for studying amber inclusions.

Program and other offers

The special exhibition opens digitally on 8 April so that visitors can experience it from the comfort of their own homes. Even though the museum is closed, you can wander through the exhibition per mouse click. In addition to a virtual view, our website includes a video tour and behind-the-scenes glances. We hope to offer activities in the Zoological Museum in the upcoming year, such as lectures and guided tours for different age groups. Consult our website for current visiting times and events. The exhibition displays objects and scientific findings from all three of our museums: the Zoological Museum, the Geological-Paleontological Museum, and the Mineralogical Museum.

Zoologisches Museum

Centrum für Naturkunde (CeNak)
Bundesstraße 52
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Find out more about the exhibition, the related program, and current developments at www.uni-hamburg.de/eozaen.



Opening times*

Tuesday–Sunday: 10 am–5 pm
Closed on Mondays and public holidays
Free admission / wheelchair accessible

* Check our website for opening times and hygiene rules throughout the coronavirus pandemic.



- Zoologisches Museum
- Mineralogisches Museum
- Geologisch-Paläontologisches Museum

ZOOLOGISCHES MUSEUM

Eocene

The Dawn of Our World

8.4.21
– 23.1.22



Collage featuring the *Gastornis*, jewel beetles, and *Leptictidium*, © Tim Bertelink (*Leptictidium*)



Every end contains a new beginning

In our special exhibition *Eocene—The Dawn of Our World*, we travel back in time to a period in Earth's history when the animal world had to develop anew. Just a few million years earlier, an asteroid extinguished a majority of life on Earth. The Eocene tells the story of a new beginning about 34 to 56 million years ago, when mammals and birds took over from the reign of the dinosaurs and laid the groundwork for today's species diversity. From 8 April 2021 to 23 January 2022, visitors can experience the beginnings of the world as we know it today. Objects such as insects trapped in amber and fossils from ocean deposits bear witness and make this epoch in Earth's history palpable. A discovery tour makes the whole family's trip to the Zoological Museum an educational and exciting journey to the past.

On the trail of the Eocene

Central Europe was once covered in forest. Hamburg was submerged in water, and the climate was tropical. Visitors will have some surprises when they encounter not just the flora but the fauna: Did dinosaurs really become extinct? Or do their descendants still move among us—without us really noticing? Whoever looks at the reconstructed skeleton of the *Gastornis*,

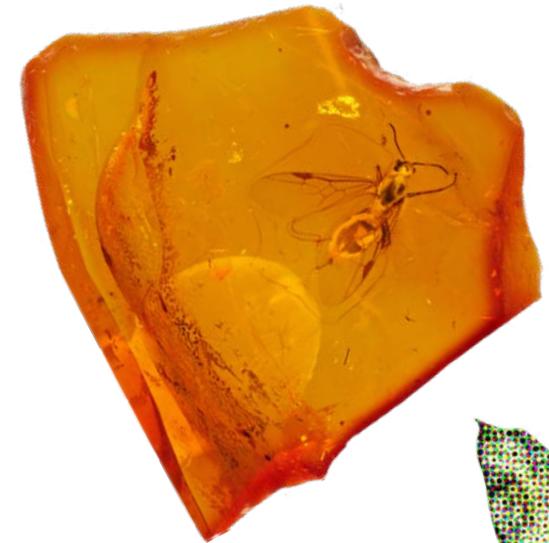
a large bird adapted to run, can clearly see how dinosaur genes have been preserved. Mammals, too, developed in this exciting chapter of Earth's history and enriched the animal world with myriad species such as the primordial horse (*Propalaeotherium parvulum*). The exhibition shows the diversity of the era's animal world in displays of amber inclusions and fossils, primarily from sites such as the Messel Pit near Darmstadt (oil shale) and the Geisetal near Halle (lignite).

Amber: More than just a piece of jewelry

The term “Eocene” stands for a new beginning; its origin means “break of day” or “dawn.” Sun stones—or amber—are another exhibition highlight. These pieces of amber encase long-extinct species whose modern-day relatives now live in significantly warmer regions. The exhibition



prehistoric horse (*Propalaeotherium parvulum*), © UHH, RRZ/MCC, Mentz



winged ant (*Vantatomyrmex geinitzi*), inclusion in Baltic amber, © UHH/CeNak, Thure Daalgaard



showcases some of the most exciting of CeNak's 6,000 pieces alongside some loans. There is a great deal of diversity, including small animal and plant inclusions and commodities. There are vivid explanations of amber's ability to tell us about the past and the difficulties of mining and trading this valuable matter.