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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Well-Preserved Cave Bear Discovered in Russia's Melting Arctic Permafrost

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The cave bear is believed to have lived between 22,000 and 39,500 years ago. **North-Eastern Federal University**

Reindeer herders in Russia's Arctic have discovered what scientists say is the first-ever cave bear carcass with soft tissues intact in the region's rapidly thawing permafrost.

The Ice Age-era animal is believed to have lived between 22,000 and 39,500 years ago, Russia's North-Eastern Federal University (NEFU) said in a statement Monday. Previously, the university said they have come across only the skulls and bones of the prehistoric species that became extinct around 15,000 years ago.

Embed:

> I took these photos in New York @AMNH in 2018. Cave bears must have been absolutely terrifying. When rearing up, an adult male could reach 3.5 metres in

> height. See the graphic from today's Times #IceAgeBears #CaveBear pic.twitter.com/sOXQSyDVkx
>
> — The Ice Age ☒☒☒ (@Jamie_Woodward_) September 14, 2020

"Today this is the first and only find of its kind — a whole bear carcass with soft tissues," scientist Lena Grigorieva said.

"It is completely preserved, with all internal organs in place including even its nose," Grigorieva added. "This find is of great importance for the whole world."

The herders found the well-preserved remains on the Lyakhovsky Islands, which are part of the New Siberian Islands archipelago 4,500 kilometers northeast of Moscow in Russia's Far North.

Radiocarbon analysis is needed to narrow down the cave bear's age, said Maxim Cheprasov, senior researcher at the Mammoth Museum in Russia's northern republic of Sakha.

Permafrost melt in Siberia has led to the discoveries of mammoths, woolly rhinos, Ice Age foal, puppies and cave lion cubs in recent years.

Scientists say complete skeletons of extinct animals are relatively rare finds.

Russia's Arctic and Siberian regions, already warming at a faster rate than the rest of the world, are facing a historic summer heat wave accompanied by wildfires, fuel spills, crop failures and more.

Climate scientists warn that melting permafrost in these regions could release mass amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, further accelerating climate change.

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