

Solving a 10,000-YEAR-OLD mystery

Researchers study clues to figure out what killed giant ice age moose



Bob Glotzhofer, senior curator of natural history at the Ohio Historical Society, is studying the remains of a stag moose that died at least 10,000 years ago in Medina County. The animal became extinct after the last ice age.

TOM DODGE | DISPATCH PHOTOS

Stag moose (*Cervalces scotti*)

DESCRIPTION

It had a deerlike face, a moose's body and strange, broad antlers that stood out straight from either side of its head. Each antler branched into irregular spikes that extended in all directions — some backward.

As fossils, the antlers, which are distinctive, are commonly preserved whereas relatively complete skeletons are rare.

RANGE

Long-legged and large, it could feed in the relatively deep water of wetlands on the tundra or in the spruce forests. It ranged over much of North America; multiple remains have been found in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

TIME SPAN

Its origin is unknown, but stag moose are known to have been in North America more than 25,000 years ago. They survived until about 10,000 years ago and probably were displaced by the modern moose, which invaded from Eurasia, crossing the Bering Strait land bridge.

Source: Illinois State Geological Survey



Digging deep

The remains of the stag moose were buried under more than 16 feet of soil, clay and peat. The different layers:

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|-----------------------------|
| Topsoil: 1 foot |
| Subsoil: 3 feet |
| Red-brown clay: 4 feet |
| Blue clay: 6 feet |
| Peat: 2 feet |
| Calcereous/shells: 0.5 foot |

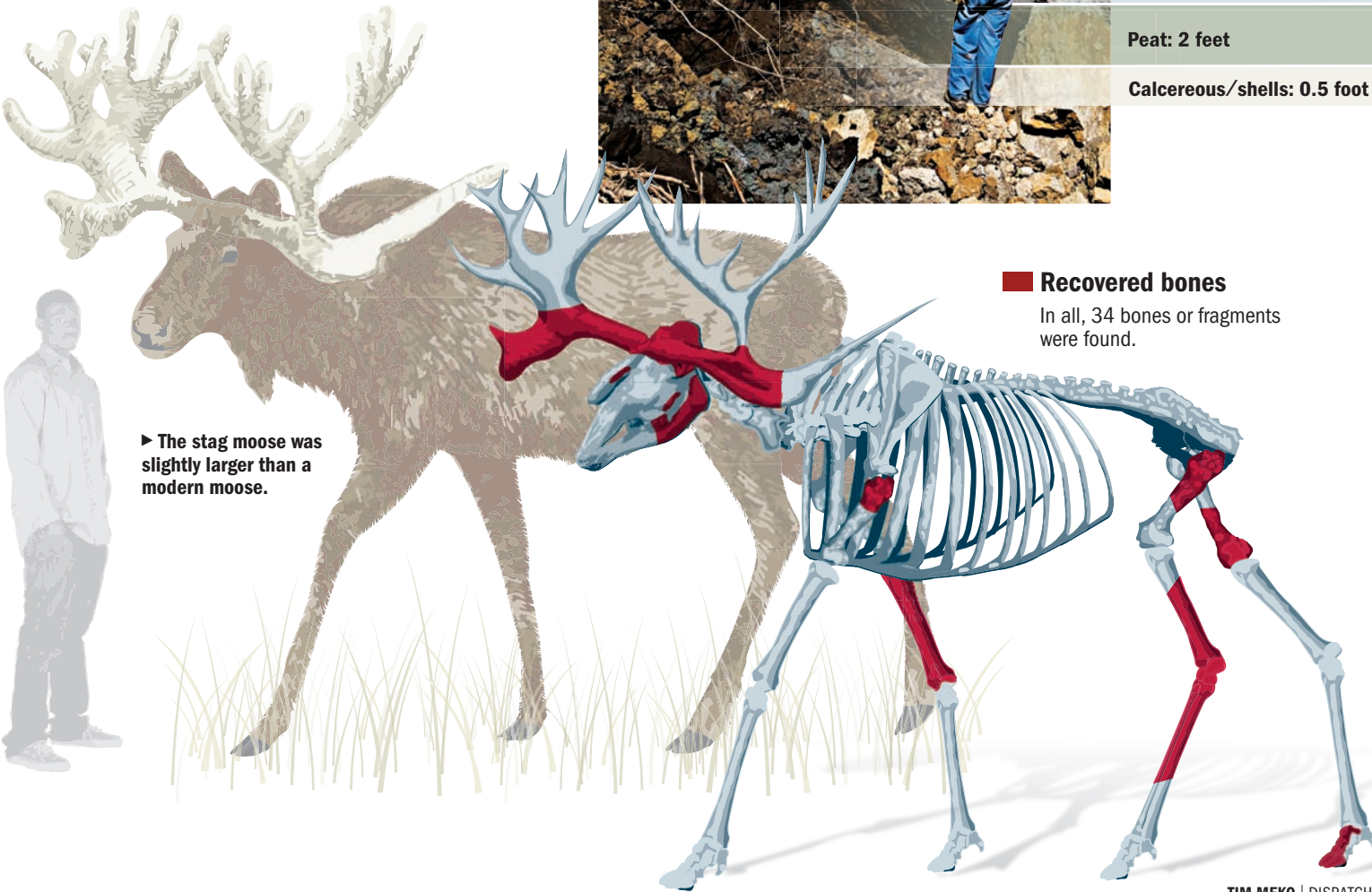


THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH



Researchers wonder whether this puncture in the stag moose's forelimb was caused by an ancient, long-extinct predator. One suspect is the short-faced bear.

Sources: The Ohio Historical Society and Ohio Division of Natural Resources



Recovered bones

In all, 34 bones or fragments were found.

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