

Discovery of fire likely evolutionary boon for early humans

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

How and when did early man *really* discover fire? That was the subject of a recent review by John Gowlett in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*.

In Dr. Gowlett's analysis, our ancestors' first interaction with fire probably came following a lightning storm or other weather event that triggered natural wildfires. These wildfires would cause animals to scatter, making them easy pickings for early humans waiting on the periphery. (Other animals, such as hawks, are known to engage in such behavior.)

Additionally, after the fire had subsided, the burnt landscape would have allowed for much easier foraging. Some of the foraged food would have been "cooked" by the wildfire, making it more edible and nutritious than when raw. As a result, one of the direct evolutionary benefits of fire was the ability to derive more energy from food. Powerful, hungry brains need calories, and [cooked food provides more calories than raw food](#). Fire, therefore, helped intelligent humans evolve.

Read full, original post: [How and When Did Humans Discover Fire?](#)