

DNA analysis shows ‘everyone had been wrong’ about mysterious Siberian unicorn

It didn't look much like the dainty unicorns of myth and legend, but the extinct unicorn of Siberia is even more entrancing for palaeontologists.

Now, for the first time, scientists have analysed its DNA – and realised everyone had been wrong about the mysterious beast.

The ancient rhinoceros didn't die off 200,000 years ago, before the last Ice Age – as we previously thought. The strange animals survived much, much longer, only disappearing as recently as 36,000 years ago. In fact, they could have lived alongside modern humans.

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But humans likely had nothing to do with the animal's disappearance.

“If we look at timing, it's during a period of climate change, which wasn't extreme, but it did cause a whole bunch of much colder winters that we think really altered the extent of the grassland in the area,” [said researcher] Alan Cooper.

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At around the same time, other animals in the area that ate grass started to switch their diets to herbs, shrubs and whatever other vegetation they could sink their teeth into, but not the Siberian unicorn. It kept on munching on grass, even as, the researchers believe, encroaching permafrost killed it off.

“It looks like this unicorn thing was so specialised to eat grass it couldn't survive,” Cooper said.

Read full, original post: [DNA of The Mysterious ‘Siberian Unicorn’ Has Been Analysed For The First Time](#)