

‘Puzzle of a million pieces’: New study traces humanity’s birthplace to northern Botswana

[\[A\] study](#), appearing [October 28] in the journal Nature, uses genetic, archaeological, linguistic and climatic evidence to argue that the ancestral homeland of everyone alive today was in northern Botswana—not in East Africa, as previously thought. Based on mitochondrial DNA, passed down from mother to daughter, the paper’s co-authors argue that we are all descended from a small community of Khoisan hunter-gatherers who lived 200,000 years ago in vast wetlands encompassing Botswana’s Okavango Delta and the Makgadikgadi regions.

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The new research fits with other recent genetic evidence of human origin in southern Africa, including a [study earlier this year](#) suggesting that a migration from that region to East Africa, and the resulting mixture with populations there, might have been a key turning point in the evolution of modern humans and their migration out of Africa. [Another paper](#) this year also argues that a migration from southern Africa to East Africa immediately preceded a major out-of-Africa migration 100,000 to 70,000 years ago.

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“We’re dealing with a puzzle of a million pieces,” [archaeologist James] Cole says, “and we’ve probably got the first 100 in place.”

Read full, original post: [Lush Okavango Delta Pinpointed as Ancestral Homeland of All Living Humans](#)