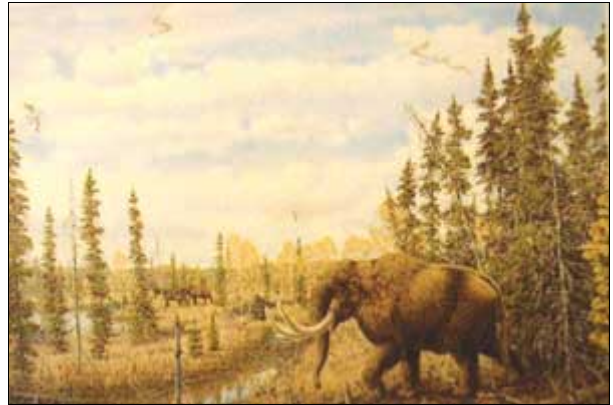


Mammoth Fossil Found

Roger Castillo was walking along the banks of the Guadalupe River in California with his Labrador retriever when he noticed something unusual. He had stumbled on an awfully big bone.

Castillo had watched many television shows about fossils. At first, he thought the bone was part of the rib cage of a large dinosaur. Then Castillo took a closer look. He noticed that the bones had an interesting shape. "That's when it hit me," Castillo told the *San Jose Mercury News*. "It's ivory! They're **tusks**!"¹



nrcs.usda.gov

Woolly Mammoths walked the earth thousands of years ago.

A few days after the find, scientists confirmed that a cluster of fossils, including the tusks, belong to a mammoth that had roamed the area between 10,000 and 40,000 years ago. Scientists also found a massive pelvic bone and rib cage fragments. The fossils are remains of a Columbian **mammoth**, an elephant-like creature that grazed in the grasslands around San Francisco Bay. Columbian mammoths weighed up to 10 tons and stood about 13 feet tall.

Mammoths first arrived in California from South America about 2 million years ago. Many lived in Northern California between ice ages. Columbian mammoths were cousins of the more familiar woolly mammoths. Both mysteriously disappeared.

Tens of thousands of fossil fragments—of mammoths, camels, saber-toothed cats, and other animals—have been found in the area. Scientists hope to find even more bones.

¹ **tusk**: a very long, large tooth (as of an elephant, walrus, or boar) that sticks out when the mouth is closed and is used especially for digging food or as a weapon