

# A well-preserved woolly rhino with its last meal still intact found in the extreme north of Yakutia

By Valeria Sukhova

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The unique discovery was three or four years old when it died at least 20,000 years ago.



**It is the best preserved to date juvenile woolly rhino ever found in Yakutia, with a lot of its internal organs – including its teeth, part of the intestines, a lump of fat and tissues - kept intact for thousands of years in permafrost. Picture: Valery Plotnikov**

The juvenile rhino with thick hazel-coloured hair and the horn, found next to the carcass was discovered in the middle of August in permafrost deposits by river Tirekhtyakh in the Abyisky ulus (district) of the Republic of Sakha.

The sensational discovery is still in the Arctic Yakutia waiting for ice roads to form, so that it can be delivered to scientists in the republic's capital Yakutsk.

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'The young rhino was between three and four years old and lived separately from its mother when it died, most likely by drowning', said Dr Valery Plotnikov from the Academy of Sciences who has been to the discovery site and made the first description of the find.

'The gender of the animal is still unknown. We are waiting for the radiocarbon analyses to define when it lived, the most likely range of dates is between 20,000 and 50,000 years ago. The rhino has a very thick short underfur, very likely it died in summer', Dr Plotnikov said.







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The rhino’s carcass is 80 per cent intact; it was discovered by local resident Alexei Savvin close to the site where the world’s only baby woolly rhino called Sasha was dug out in 2014. Sasha’s age has been since confirmed as 34,000 years.

Two extinct cave lion cubs later called Boris and Sparta were also found in the Abyisky district of Yakutia last year close to the Tirekhtyakh River.

Sasha the woolly rhino was seven months old when it died and had lightly-coloured strawberry blond fur/hair. The baby rhino also had stubs of two horns.

Dr Plotnikov said of Sasha: 'We have learned that woolly rhinoceroses were covered in very thick hair. Previously, we could judge this only from rock paintings discovered in France.

'Now, judging by the thick coat with the undercoat, we can conclude that the rhinoceroses were fully adapted to the cold climate from a young age.'

**Sasha the baby woolly rhino found in 2014 in Yakutia lived 34,000 years ago. Pictures: Albert Protopopov, The Siberian Times**





