

The Effects of Cooking on the Isotopic Composition of Alaskan Fauna - Preliminary Results

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Host Department: Museum of Anthropological Archaeology

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Time: 12:30 pm

Location: Room 2009 Ruthven Museums Building

Description:

It has been demonstrated that certain food preparation techniques can alter isotopic composition, such as heating and fermentation (Brettal et al 2012). While it is known that cooking can alter isotopic composition, the impact of heat and fermentation on Alaskan fauna has yet to be studied.

Archaeologists are beginning to unravel the complex subsistence practices that were employed throughout prehistory in Alaska, but the antiquity of ethnographically documented preservation techniques such as smoking and fermentation remains elusive. Profiling the impact of preservation techniques on isotopic composition will provide a better understanding of isotopic variation specific to the fauna of this region, and may lead to a greater understanding of prehistoric caching and other early survival strategies in Alaska.