Sparassodonta: Metatherian mammals of South America

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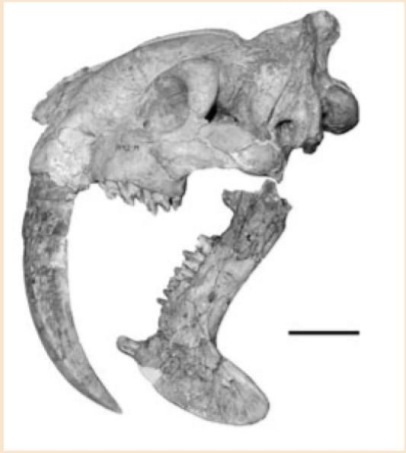
Distinctive Features - cranium and dentary [1]

[a] *Cladosictis patagonica*, from the early Miocene (Santacrucian Age)

Lateral view of cranium and left dentary with 5 cm scale bar

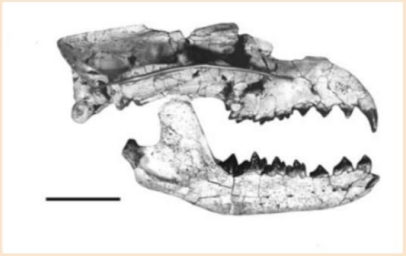
[b] *Thylacosmilus atrox*, from the late early Pliocene (Chapadmalalan Age)



Lateral view of cranium and left dentary with 5cm scale bar

[c] *Lycopsis longirostrus,* from the middle Miocene (Laventan Age)

Lateral view of cranium and right dentary with 5 cm scale bar



[d] Sparassodonts were a exclusively monophyletic group in South America and the majority of fossil evidence is concentrated in the South of the continent. It is especially evident in Argentina, where 64 out of the 84 fossils were found. [1]

Extinction

The extinction of the Sparassodonta was hypothesized to be due to competition or faunal changes, or both. However, competition was ruled out due to the fact that they did not overlap in geological time. Therefore, evidence shows that it is more likely that they became extinct due to faunal changes. [1]

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