



PRESS RELEASE

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Museum Lecture Series: What birds can tell us about climate change in Gibraltar

The next in the series of Museum Lectures will be held this Thursday 26th January at 7pm at the John Mackintosh Hall. Speakers Clive and Stewart Finlayson will be talking on the subject of climate change in Gibraltar with particular reference to birds and the information that they can give us.

The long palaeontological sequences at Gorham's and Vanguard Caves, supplemented by others such as Devil's Tower Rock Shelter, give us a window into the past. Covering the last 125,000 years they take us from an interglacial, when global climate was actually warmer than today, through an erratic sequence of climatic changes. For most of this time global climate was cooler than at present and sea levels dropped significantly, by as much as 120 metres, creating dramatic changes in the landscape. With the remains of 151 bird species now identified in the caves, they are the most important in Eurasia.

Clive and Stewart will take us on a journey back in time and show us what birds can tell us about climate. Was it really that cold in Gibraltar when much of the United Kingdom was under a kilometre of ice? Do we find birds in Gibraltar then that are not found here today and, if so, what do they tell us about climate change? Did it ever get warm enough for African species to arrive from the south? These are among the questions that will be addressed. Finally, some examples of recent changes to bird distribution patterns will be used to look at the speed with which birds can respond to environmental perturbations.

The lecture will be illustrated with photographs taken by the speakers.

The lecture is open to the public and is free of charge.