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FIELD GUIDE TO FOSSIL COLLECTING AT RAMSHOLT IN SUFFOLK

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Ramsholt has a wealth of fossils to offer the collector. The London Clay Formation, the Red Crag Formation and the Coralline Crag Formation are exposed here along the muddy banks of the River Deben. The fossils from the Red Crag Basement Bed are also present, from which fossil crabs and shark teeth can be collected. The site has a profusion of fossils and collectors will not come any empty-handed.

The site at Ramsholt is an SSSDI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), so there should be no digging into the bedrock. In any case, fossils are to be found along the foreshore and there is no need for digging. The fossils are mostly remarkably well preserved.

Equipment is minimal and fossils can simply be picked up along the foreshore, so a few bags (or plastic takeaway containers) and tissue pap[er or kitchen towel will be the only necessities required.

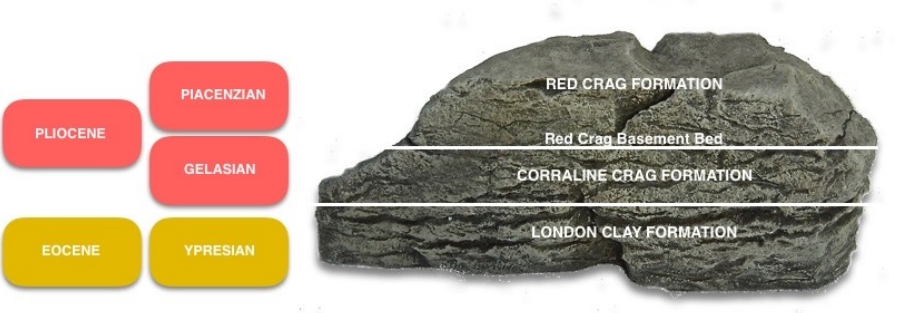
THE GEOLOGY & WHERE TO LOOK FOR FOSSILS

Look along the foreshore where fossils are very apparent, exposed by the tides. The site is tidal so make sure that you consult with a tide timetable before setting out. Scouring conditions are best and early Spring is an ideal time for these conditions. Equipment is minimal. A good pair of eyes and a hands and knees search will give results.

At the bottom of the low lying cliff is the Coralline Crag, which will yield corals and bryozoans. The cliffs are somewhat overgrown with vegetation but lying just above the Coralline Crag is the Red Crag Basement Bed; a derived bed of Miocene age. Where the sea has washed the bed out, rolled stones and pebbles lie one the foreshore. Look amongst this accumulation of stones for rolled fossils for fossil crabs.

At the top of the cliff lies the Red Crag Formation of Pliocene Age, where shells, sharks teeth and occasional bones can be found.

Beyond the beach is the thick, sticky clay of the London Clay Formation of Eocene Age. The muddy conditions make collection a lot more difficult here and fossils are obscured by the mud. Fossil to occur here, especially shark teeth, fish and shark vertebrae and turtle carapace.



Here are a good representative samples of the fossils that you are most likely to find at Ramsholt..

Pectan maximus
Red Crag Formation

Bryozoan
Coralline Crag Formation

Cardita maple
Coralline Crag Formation

Crab
Red Crag Basement Bed

Hoplites maritimes
Red Crag Basement Bed

Neptunea contraria
Red Crag Formation

Venus casina
Red Crag Formation

Pecten opercularis
Red Crag Formation

Crabs
Red Crag Basement Bed

Nipa palm fruit
London Clay Formation

Lobster
London Clay Formation

Bryozoan
Coralline Crag Formation

Bryozoan
Coralline Crag Formation

Laeuastarte bipartita
Red Crag Formation

Bryozoan
Coralline Crag Formation

Various corals from the Coralline Crag Formation

Shark Teeth

Miocene Age from the Red Crag Basement Bed

CLEANING & STORING YOUR FINDS

Cleaning & preservation

Cleaning & preservation

RamsholtBarton-on-Sea have already survived millions of years! They have been buried in sediment and washed around by the tides. However, treat them with care, as some can be incredibly fragile and will need to be cleaned and treated, to allow them to be handled.

Loose clay can be removed very carefully with a toothbrush. Some of the shells might have clay inside them, so extra care is required here. Leave them to dry naturally and not on top of a radiator. Sharks teeth will need no extra treatment to preserve them.

Any fossil found on a beach or exposed to salt water will need desalination. In other words you do need to wash the seawater out of your fossils as the absorbed salt may lead to long-term damage, particularly of the shells.

Do not be tempted to varnish your fossils as this can leave an unsightly surface coating. However, you might need to treat more delicate specimens. For this, simply dilute some PVA in water at a ratio of 1:3 (PVA:water.) and allow to dry. This will help to harden the more delicate specimens.

Storage

Storage is a matter of preference and small boxes of card or plastic are probably a good place to start (See https://earthlines.com**).** Most importantly, your specimens need a label. A fossil collection will be worthless if you do not, at least, record where you found the fossil, even if you don't know the fossil names - you can always name them at a later time. A simple label like this example will be useful.

Storage

Name: Neptunea contraria
Location: RRamsholt, Suffolk
Geology: Red Crag Formation
Age: Pliocene, . Placenzian Stage
Date found: March 2024

DISCLAIMER

This downloadable PDF is one of a series of general guides to fossil collecting localities and not an extensive manual for health and safety when visiting such sites.

Furthermore, because potential hazards may change over time, prior to undertaking any fossil collecting activities, you need to make yourself aware of any RISKS, DANGERS, HAZARDS and LEGAL IMPLICATIONS associated with visiting and collecting fossils at any particular site.

UK Fossils, authors or any associated parties cannot be held responsible for your failure to do so, nor any consequences thereof.

Enjoy your fossil collecting safely and responsibly.