

27th meeting of SAfA at the University of Algarve in Faro, Portugal, hosted by the
Interdisciplinary Centre for Archaeology and Evolution of Human Behaviour (ICArEHB),
July 21st-26th 2025



Session number / title: 48 - Exploitation of Aquatic Resources in the African Stone Age

Session organizers:

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Abstract: With only a few notable exceptions, evolutionary research and models have focused on terrestrial resources and foods as the key drivers of, technological, cognitive, and dietary change throughout the Stone Age. Africa features extensive aquatic systems, including saline coasts and lakes, freshwater lakes, wetlands, and rivers, which provided durable aquatic resources that hominins could have relied on, regardless of seasonal shifts that might have affected terrestrial food supplies during the Plio-Pleistocene. The continent's aquatic environments harbour rich aquatic and amphibious biota, including relatively mobile (e.g., fishes, aquatic mammals) and more sedentary (e.g., molluscs) taxa that offer potentially plentiful sources of protein and fats. Furthermore, these ecosystems also supply floral and mineral resources with unique properties suitable for modification and use for exploitation by technologically-driven hominin foragers. This session aims to open a broad discussion about aquatic resource use across the Plio-Pleistocene in Africa and draws together current research including comparative work from Europe and Asia. We particularly encourage contributions focusing on the selection, modification and use, and/or consumption of coastal and lacustrine biota, particularly molluscs, but also welcome the potentially important role of aquatic resources in human evolution, including (but not restricted to) examples of symbolic or decorative items.

Instructions for abstract submission: Participants can submit their abstracts during the call for individual submissions, which will be open from December 5, 2024 – January 31, 2025.

To be associated to this session, please select the session title “Exploitation of Aquatic Resources in the African Stone Age” during the submission process.

All relevant information for individual submissions will be posted on <https://safA2025.icarehb.com>

A preliminary program will be posted on the [SAfA website](#) in January 2025.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sonia Harmand, Nicholas Taylor, Bert Van Bocxlaer, and Xavier Boës.