

Scavenging for food as early hominid activity

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The article “ Scavenger Hunt” by Pat Shipman takes a look at the activities of Early Hominids in terms of food hunting and gathering, specifically in the African plains of Kenya. To her surprise, early hominids portrayed a somewhat unusually trait rather than the established fact about early hominids as well-established hunters. It seemed that the foundations of early humans of the Neolithic age, that were built around hunting and gathering may collapse and be replaced with something that we cannot be proud of.

However, it is a possibility since some still exhibit such trait in the modern world. Scavenging is a well-known activity of many mammalian carnivores in Africa. However, some are still pure or nearly pure in terms of hunting and scavenging. Nonetheless, a lot of the well-known carnivores such as pack hunters or the big predators practice a hybrid of strategies in order to fill their stomachs. Much to her surprise, Pat Shipman discovered that early hominids (*Homo Habilis*, *Australopithecus africanus*, *A.*

Robustus) practice scavenging more often than hunting. There were many evidences to this claim that early men who utilized stone tools were scavengers rather than established hunters. In the same sense, bipedalism also suggested that early hominids practiced scavenging, as their bodies were suited for such activities. Bone marks also suggested such an activity by Early Hominids. It may have been much later when hominids became established hunters—much in the time of *Homo Erectus* and the invention of fire.

However, being a scavenger was not all bad as it had advantages that involved energy efficiency; as many mammalian predators would agree to.

They would scavenge what they can and hunt when they must (Shipman 115). It is somewhat an interesting fact to discover an unusual early hominid activity, as it quickly reassembled my knowledge that all early bipedal hominids were established hunters rather than scavengers (I would not argue that they were not gatherers). It does not really come as a shock but much more like an interesting surprise. Well, it was supported astoundingly by Pat Shipman and her colleagues.

There is nothing wrong with scavenging as it was a risky but brilliant strategy done by most predatory mammals, which apparently includes early hominids with Neolithic tools. I would not say that I was quite disappointed in discovering such a characteristic belonging to early hominids—the supposed achieved hunters of the African plain, or of any other plain. Scavenging is actually an effective strategy as it ensured the survival of many early hominids without the expense of immense energy from hunting and killing the prey. Carcasses provided them with skin or hide for their clothing, and meat (of course).

The scavenging trait of early hominids are still much present to a lot of modern humans today—especially those who are unable to provide themselves with proper food. That discovered fact from the article helped me clear some things up about modern humans possessing characteristics similar to a scavenger—like a vulture perhaps, minus the flying. It made me realize that the source of such trait may have occurred as an instinctive practice by early humans—to grab what they can from their surroundings—which was not bad at all since it enabled people to survive this long.

Possessing the hunting-scavenging trait, humans have become a well-known survivor that can adapt to any condition. Pat Shipman took a different angle in analyzing early hominid activity, in terms of food gathering and their diet. The results were not all bad as scavenging provided a lot of things for early hominids, and ensured their survival for quite a long time. This trait may have been carried over to this date. " We scavenge what we can and hunt if we must," should very much explain early hominid activity.