

# LIVING LARGE IN THE ICE AGE

## SABER-TOOTHED CAT

What would the woolly mammoth be without its arch-nemesis, the saber-toothed "tiger," *Smilodon fatalis*? One of the most recognizable fossil mammals, *S. fatalis* wasn't technically a tiger, but it was part of the same baramin. Weighing up to 600 pounds (270 kg) (as large as a Siberian tiger) and possessing 7-inch (18 cm) canine teeth, *S. fatalis* hunted across all of North America, and successfully migrated into Central and South America, where it also became the top predator.

## GLYPTOTHERIUM

Armored from head to toe and equipped with a large, spiky tail, the armadillo-like *Glyptotherium texanum* was a slow-moving plant-eater virtually immune from attack. The only way to kill one would be to flip it over, but since it weighed nearly one ton and was very compact (only 6 feet [2 m] long), flipping it over was no easy task. While *Glyptotherium* is technically an "Ice Age mammal" because it lived at the same time as other creatures of this icy era, it was no fan of the cold, preferring the southerly climate of Central America, the Gulf of Mexico, and the American Southwest.

## WOOLLY MAMMOTH

An Ice Age collection wouldn't be complete without the woolly mammoth, *Mammuthus primigenius*. Standing 9 feet (3 m) tall and weighing in at over 5 tons, *M. primigenius* is why the word *mammoth* is a common word for *huge* in the first place. Its distribution, too, was as big as its name: woolly mammoth fossils are found across the Northern Hemisphere, from the United Kingdom and Germany to Kazakhstan, Russia, Canada, and the United States (from Washington State to Maryland). Their adaptations to cold climates include a heavy coat of hair, a fat layer under the skin, and small ears (by elephant standards!).

## GIANT BEAVER

Who would have thought that beavers could get so big? The giant beaver *Castoroides ohioensis* could grow to over 8 feet (2.5 m) long and weigh up to 200 pounds (90 kg). Like modern beavers, *Castoroides* had long, sharp incisors. Its skeletal anatomy, though larger, is very similar in proportion to living beavers, leading most paleontologists to believe that *Castoroides* probably looked and behaved much the same, having a large, flat tail and building dams. *Castoroides ohioensis* fossils are found east of the Rocky Mountains in the United States, and in Ontario and the Yukon Territory, Canada.

