

16.07.2025
IZS Colloquium

Dr. Faysal Bibi

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Privat Dozent (Lecturer) at the Institute of Biochemistry and Biology, University of Potsdam

In this talk, he will present their recent project titled “The PALEONILE Project: Faunal and Human Evolution in the Pleistocene of Sudan” which investigates the role of the Nile River as a pathway for animal and human movement during the Ice Age (Pleistocene). Since 2018, his team has been conducting fieldwork in eastern Sudan, especially along the Atbara River valley, to better understand ancient environments, fossils, and human activity in the Nile Basin.

Their work has uncovered numerous of new fossil and archaeological sites, along with detailed dating of the region’s history from about 400,000 to 15,000 years ago. These include fossils from over 30 species of animals—some rare or previously unknown in this area—as well as tools and remains of archaic humans, showing that different human species lived in the region for long periods and overlapped in time with early *Homo sapiens* elsewhere in Africa.

In 2023, additional surveys were carried out in other parts of Sudan, including the Blue and White Nile rivers. They revisited historic sites like Singa and used new dating methods to re-evaluate key discoveries, including a famous human skull that may be younger than previously thought.

Altogether, their results highlight the importance of Sudan and the Nile in shaping the story of human and animal evolution in Africa.