

Ross MacPhee, Curator of Race to the End of the Earth
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Ross MacPhee is the former chairman of the Department of Mammalogy at the American Museum of Natural History, where he has been curator since 1988. Dr. MacPhee has conducted fieldwork and scientific investigations in both polar regions. Most recently, he has been at work on islands in the James Ross group in the northern Weddell Sea, Antarctica, looking for fossil evidence of early mammals that crossed into Antarctica 45 million years ago, when southernmost South America and the Antarctic Peninsula were connected by a now-severed land bridge.

Also known for his paleomammalogical research on island faunas, his investigations in Siberia and Yukon have focused on how extinctions occur, particularly those in which humans are thought to be implicated during the past 100,000 years. Dr. MacPhee has also collaborated with geneticists and molecular biologists to develop the new tool of “ancient DNA” for studying the population structure and ultimate collapse of Pleistocene mammals. He has been involved in several television documentaries on mammoths and their world, including *Raising the Mammoth* (Discovery Channel) and *What Killed the Megabeasts?* (Channel 4, UK).

Dr. MacPhee taught at the University of Victoria from 1975 to 1976 and received his Ph.D. from the University of Alberta in 1977. He was previously associate professor of anatomy at Duke University Medical Center. He has also taught courses at Columbia University, New York University, and several universities in Canada. In addition to having published more than 130 papers in scientific journals, he has edited two major collections, *Extinctions in Near Time: Causes, Contexts, and Consequences* (1999) and *Primates and Their Relatives in Phylogenetic Perspective* (2006).

Dr. MacPhee’s research interests span the evolutionary history of mammals, island biogeography, and the biology and causation of extinction. He has led or participated in more than 50 scientific expeditions in 14 countries, including both Polar Regions.