

The Cats of Vatera

Two or three species of larger cats lived around Vatera, two million years ago. We don't know yet what cats these were, because only some damaged limb bones were found, nothing more. The largest most probably was a sabre-toothed cat (*Homotherium latidens*), another maybe the much smaller dirk-toothed cat (*Megantereon cultridens*), and the third might have been a lynx (*Lynx issiodorensis*).

Homotherium was as large as a lion. Its teeth have crenulations along the border. *Homotherium* was comparatively slender with strikingly elongated forelimbs and a short tail. *Megantereon* on the other hand was much smaller, about the size of a large leopard. Its teeth have smooth borders. *Megantereon* had especially massive forelimbs and large claws. Although it is relatively small, it is much more massive and more powerful than *Homotherium*.

A much smaller cat lived in the forest, resembling the wild jungle cats of the subtropical forests of today (*Felis* sp.).