

The Fossil Sites of Vatera

Eight sites in the area around Vatera yielded fossil remains of a Plio-Pleistocene age: the DS-site, E-site, F-site, H-site, R-site, S-site, T-site and U-site. The F-site is by far the most rich, followed by the DS-site. The other sites yielded only one or a few fossils. Apart from these sites, there are the Fish-locality and the Shell-terrain, which abound in fish and shell remains respectively. All sites and localities are situated in the area between Vrissa, where the Natural History Collection is housed, and Vatera. Copyright Google Earth DS-siteLatitude 39° 1' 32.09" NLongitude 26° 11' 33.07" EThe “Daniela-Sandra”-site, named after two of the excavators, yielded a similar fossil fauna as the famous F-site. E-siteLatitude 39° 1' 46.30" NLongitude 26° 11' 51.07" EThe “Electric-site” is actually next to a concrete water tank, but when some fossils were found there, the excavators mistook it for some sort of building for electricity. F-siteLatitude 39° 1' 44.79" NLongitude 26° 11' 23.04" EThe “Funny site” was discovered when a new dustroad was made to an olive yard. In the beginning, excavation was fruitless, till the late Paul Sondaar asked, pointing somewhere seemingly at random, “why don’t you dig there?”. That was the start of the finding of a lot of fossils. H-siteLatitude 39° 1' 23.88" NLongitude 26° 11' 56.44" EThe “House-site” is, as its name suggests already, in the backyard of one of the houses of Vatera. R-siteLatitude 39° 2' 34.73" NLongitude 26° 14' 5.17" EThe “Rhinceros”-site is a limestone quarry. Here only a partial molar of a rhinoceros was found. S-siteLatitude 39° 2' 6.50" NLongitude 26° 11' 53.75" EThe “Sandy”-site is a sand quarry. Only some fragmentary fossils, including a deer limb bone, were found here. T-siteLatitude 39° 1' 28.47" NLongitude 26° 11' 47.91" EThe “Turtle”-site yielded a practically complete skeleton plus carapax of a tortoise. U-siteLatitude 39° 1' 54.99" NLongitude 26° 11' 30.74" EThe “Unknown”-site, because originally its exact location was unknown. Shell-terrainLatitude 39° 3' 23.13" NLongitude 26° 11' 4.38" EOver a large area in an olive yard huge quantities of fossil shells are found. Fish-localityLatitude 39° 1' 15.16" NLongitude 26° 11' 11.82" EThe fish-locality yields not only abundant fossil fish remains, but also those of fossil plants. VateraLatitude 39° 1' 14.95" NLongitude 26° 11' 50.21" EThe settlement Vatera is hardly more than a beach town with a few scattered hotels, restaurants and beach bars. Vrissa Natural History CollectionLatitude 39° 2' 22.72" NLongitude 26° 11' 55.90" EThe Natural History Collection of Vrissa houses all the materials that were found in the area between Vrissa, Vatera and Polychnitos. The collection is partly exhibited and open to the public; the other part is stored in the same building. In the courtyard of the Museum, a live reconstruction of the giant tortoise walks through the grasses.