
A Last Glacial Maximum Paleo-Sakhalin-Hokkaido-Kuril Peninsula Refugium and its Implications for the Peopling of the Americas

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Résumé

Paleo-Sakhalin-Hokkaido-Kuril (PSHK) Peninsula, connected to mainland Siberia during the Pleistocene, holds valuable clues to our current understanding of initial human migration into eastern and western Beringia, and subsequently more southerly regions of the Americas. Although not situated in Beringia proper, at only 870 km away, the PSHK Peninsula is the closest region with a continuous occupation record spanning the critical time period from 30,000- 14,000 cal BP. Here, we focus our study on present day Hokkaido, Japan. We recognize three distinct events in Hokkaido during this time. First, by 26,000 cal BP during the Last Glacial Maximum, microblade technology appeared in Hokkaido alongside flake and blade assemblages and an influx in archaeological sites. By 23,000 cal BP, flake and blade assemblages disappear on Hokkaido leaving only microblade technology and a general reduction of sites. At 15,000 cal BP, bifacial leaf-shaped and stemmed points are added to microblade technology and an increase in site density. Here, we review paleoenvironments, radiocarbon records, and technological and raw material assemblage composition of each event. These data are linked to key migration signals in the genetic and archaeological records of Beringia, especially in terms of technological assemblage composition and variability of Beringian sites. These events suggest an LGM population movement into a PSHK refugium from interior Siberia, and the possible population source of multiple post-LGM movements from one parent source into western and eastern Beringia, thus producing a high degree of archaeological assemblage diversity. Our data indicates earliest routes into the Americas from PSHK Peninsula as a source population is a viable hypothesis.

Mots-Clés: Last Glacial Maximum, Hokkaido, Japan, Upper Paleolithic, Beringia, Peopling of Americas

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