

A photograph of a desk covered with numerous fragments of ancient animal bones, likely from archaeological excavations. The bones are light brown and vary in size and shape, some showing clear bone structure. In the background, a black computer keyboard and a stack of colorful books are visible, suggesting a modern research or study environment. The text "Archaeology: A Zooarchaeologist's Perspective" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

Archaeology: A Zooarchaeologist's Perspective



Zooarchaeology: What is it?

- Study of animal remains (bones, teeth, horn, antler, shells)
- Palaeolithic to Modern
- Single context to complex urban sites
- One fragment to tens of thousands

Zooarchaeology: Why?



- Basic level:
 - Species representation
 - Carcass parts
 - Mortality data
 - Size and shape
 - Trends in deposition/ taphonomy
- With some consideration this can feed into broader aspects of the site narrative:
 - Hunting
 - Status
 - Animal economy
 - Mode of production
 - Cosmology
 - Spatial use of site
 - Redistribution
 - Industry
 - Human-animal relationships



Zooarchaeology: the specialist

- In house
- Freelance – be prepared to send/ collect boxes
- Reference collection
- Good community (PZG, Zooarch)
- CPD via community/ alerts on academic papers
- Mentoring
- Recommendations for selection/ retention



Zooarchaeology: Good times

- Extra pot for research
- Adaptability for change depending on zooarch results
- Inclusion in meeting
- Good relationship with archaeologists



Zooarchaeology: Not so good times

- Revised phasing!
- Short turnaround
- Access to conferences/ papers
- Shortage of specialists
- Discrepancy between assessments and full recording
- Hard to find time to do research

Archaeologists: how you can help

- Be realistic – backlogs/ deadlines
- Quotes – give enough detail (frag count and weight)/ no. samples/ no. phases
- Large sites be prepared to sample
- Assessment preferable but not essential
- Consider full recording at assessment stage for smaller sites
- If there are specific research questions let the specialist know!
- Essential info – provide for each context (cut, feature, group, period, description, other finds)
- Let me know how you want the report structured

