

Purported yeti evidence came from bears, dog

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For fans of the yeti, newly published genetic research on purported specimens of the legendary apelike beast said to dwell in the Himalayan region may be too much to bear.

Scientists said on Tuesday that genetic analysis of nine bone, tooth, skin, hair and fecal samples from museum and private collections attributed to the yeti, also called the Abominable Snowman, found that eight came from Asian black bears, Himalayan brown bears or Tibetan brown bears and one came from a dog.

"This strongly suggests that the yeti legend has a root in biological facts and that is has to do with bears that are living in the region today," said biologist Charlotte Lindqvist of the University at Buffalo in New York and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, who led the study published in the scientific journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B.

Lindqvist called the study the most rigorous analysis to date of purported yeti specimens.

The researchers sequenced mitochondrial DNA, genetic material in structures within cells that was passed down from mothers, of purported yeti samples from Tibet, India and Nepal as well as from different bear populations.

The yeti is a creature of folklore in the Himalayan region that has become a part of Western popular culture.

Lindqvist said purported yeti samples came from places including the Messner Mountain Museum in Italy and were gathered by British TV production company Icon Films.

While no actual yeti was identified, the DNA research shed light on bear populations in the region.