

PALAEONTOLOGY EXCAVATION WORKS



POLAND – KRASIEJOW, SILESIA



JULY–AUGUST 2021





SCIENCE MEETS ADVENTURE

In Krasiejow Scientists and Explorers from all over the world work on the biggest excavation site in the country.

Krasiejow is one of the **biggest mass graveyards** of mesozoic vertebrates in Europe. Its importance was discovered in 1993, when local clay extraction workers exposed an impressive bone-bearing horizon. It has been confirmed that the present claypit was once a lake area, inhabited abundantly by aquatic, semi-aquatic and land creatures.

Tens of thousands of fossils have been extracted so far. Conifer twigs, seeds, cone scales and leaves up to 30 cm long. Carapaces of crab-like giant cycloid crustaceans. Elytra of beetles. Bivalve shells and ganoid fish skeletons. Numerous skulls of giant amphibian Metoposaurus and Cyclotosaurus. Remnants of early archosaurian reptiles – ancestors of dinosaurs, pterosaurs and crocodilians.

Silesaurus opolensis discovered here, is potentially the oldest known dinosaur on the Earth! It was a medium-sized herbivore with hind legs profiled for fast running and jaws possibly equipped with beak. Another finding from a neighbouring quarry are bones of Nothosaurs. **There is only one complete skull of a nothosaur found on the planet!**

Today Krasiejow is in the **centre of attention** of Researchers from all over the world. 14 new taxa have been established based on found fossils. 22 articles have been published in top world scientific journals. Each summer, in cooperation with Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw University and the European Center of Palaeontology, excavations are organized, revealing more and more material. Every single day is a discovery.

The European Centre of Palaeontology and Wild Areas Network want you to become a vital part of the project. Now you have a unique opportunity to contribute to this world-class research and become our Volunteer.



Volunteer Fieldnotes

„Initially we cleared the site, removed the external layers of soil and practiced the usage of dumpy level that helped us to collect the data on the location of the fossils.

During the first week we found an accumulation of aetosaur bones! Next week was even more successful – we discovered complete and very well-preserved mandibles of Metoposaurus.

Unfortunately together with bones we encountered a drought that almost stopped our works. We had to give up digging after 3-4 hours a day. Therefore we focused on remnants of smaller creatures.

The samples collected in the field were soaked in water and sifted through the sieve to divide the material into fractions. Then we analyzed the fractions using the microscope and gently isolated tiny bones. This way we collected several dozen of scales, teeth and pieces of bones of fish and archosaurs.

After the drought we could continue intensive field works and managed to find numerous mandibles and long bones of Metoposaurus as well as teeth of phytosaurs.

It was a very intensive and rewarding experience!”



What will I do?

After the introduction **you will work in a team** of friendly and open community dedicated to the research they support. **You don't have to be experienced** in the subject. The tasks will be tailored to your individual profile and needs.

You will perform a full array of tasks, from removing external soil layers with a pickaxe, through exposing bone-bearing strata with hammers, up to fossil search, ID and extraction using chisels, brushes and screwdrivers. You will also collect microfossil material for further examination with microscopes.

Then you will have an opportunity to **work in our preparatory lab** and process found fossils using fine tools, agents, glues and machinery.

Due to the nature of this work, you have to bear in mind that you may be working for long hours with no spectacular results – but **don't give up!** It's definitely worth doing!

You may get:

- the excitement of uncovering of fossil organisms that no human eye has seen before!
- a great learning experience
- sore muscles and blisters ;)



Microfossil Research Workshops

Both editions of our project have their unique features. First Edition offers very niche and rewarding, hands-on Workshops on Microfossil Research.

We will find out how to distinguish the strata containing Microfossils, collect the material and process it chemically and thermally in order to prepare it for the proper examination. We will search for and analyze our Microfossils, such as tiny fish scales, teeth or bones, using optical equipment, identify them and try to interpret our findings.

We will learn about the significance and abundance of the microfossil material that has been collected throughout the years of excavation works and discuss the results obtained so far as well as possible research perspectives.



From Dwarfs to Giants

Second Edition features a trip to neighbouring dig sites – limestone quarries with Upper-Cretaceous deposits, rich in marine fossil material.

We will search for shark teeth, ammonites, belemnites, bivalves, sea urchins, brachiopods and sponges. By changing the location, geological strata and habitat, you allow yourself to work in different context, using different methods, that will broaden your practical experience and give you a wider, richer perspective.

This area is abundant with quite spectacular findings, including the largest Ammonite found in our country – *Pachydesmoceras* of 1.2m in diameter! Some of our Volunteers will be co-authors of research papers written on the basis of the material they have discovered here.



Where will I stay?

- **In a truly unique, welcoming place**, surrounded by 3 landscape parks. Krasiejow is a small village located by a river. There's a shop, an ancient monastery and the buildings of the European Palaeontology Center where we will be based.

We will sleep in a **comfortable, wooden bungalow**. There are two rooms with bunk beds, a kitchen and a bathroom with shower. There is an electricity and Internet available by WiFi. You will need your own

sleeping bag. And don't forget the electricity plugin adapter.

Our bungalow is situated **close to the excavation site**, the Palaeontology Museum and Jura Park, where we can chill out or study during our free time. There is a prehistoric oceanarium, educational path, expositions, Cinema 5D, amusement park and bar.

The nearest bigger city, Opole, is 20 km away.



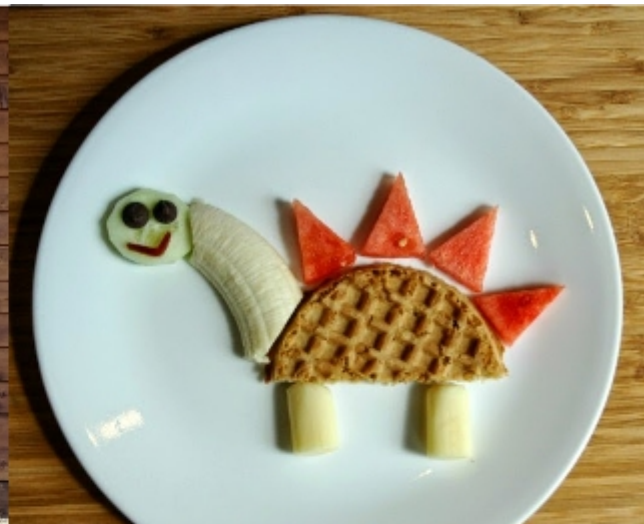
Free time!

With good organization of work **we can have plenty of free time.** And then...

The idea is to try something new. Share our passions and learn from each other. Bring anything that crosses your mind – a game, an instrument that you play, a recipe for a delicious meal or other things. Tell us about your hobbies or your interesting job. Teach us unique skills that you have. **Share anything you want – it's up to you!**

In this beautiful place you can get suntan and a refreshing bath on a local beach :) Here the weather is much sunnier than in UK!

As Volunteers of the European Center of Palaeontology, we have **free and unlimited access to the entire Theme Park** and Human Evolution Center. We can walk freely around the outdoor complex also beyond normal hours of operation, which is quite an amazing and relaxing experience.



What's in it for me?



Boost your CV with our Certificate of Participation!

We offer HANDS-ON intensive international exchange of specialist palaeontological experience and knowledge and HANDS-ON experience in field research abroad, especially important for Earth Sciences Graduates, Students, Wildlife Volunteers and Professionals. We will provide training in high-standard techniques of fossil ID, extraction methods and data registration.



Gain much more than a „formal” qualification!

We offer deep contact with Living Science, 24 hours a day! You can reconnect with rhythms of Nature and transform your life through Work. You will have an opportunity to make lifelong friends with inspiring, like-minded people. You will experience invaluable and refreshing international, intercultural exchange. You will gain unforgettable memories.



***Experience life like in a documentary movie...
for real.***

How much will it cost?



You will spend £365 for 10 days of your stay,

including transfers from Opole to the site and back, accomodation, Microfossil Workshops or Field Trip and entry to the Jura Park. It also covers our vocational training confirmed by the Certificate of Participation.

The price does not include meals because we will most likely eat at the Jura Park, where you will be totally free to mix your dishes (or we can choose to cook our own food) - we don't want to decide how much you spend on meals and what you eat. In the Park you will get a decent lunch for £7.

Although our fee doesn't include plane tickets and insurance, everything else is covered for you. **Learn about our 100% money-back guarantee on our website [HERE](#).**



***Contribute to world-class palaeontological research
of critical importance:
become a part of something bigger.***

What if I have to change my plans?

We are fully aware that, especially in other parts of Europe, the COVID epidemic situation has been far more severe than here in Poland. We want to support our Volunteers who may suffer organisational and financial uncertainty.

That's why we've decided that the **entire Participation Fee is FULLY REFUNDABLE** provided that you will inform us about changes in your plans at least one week before the camp start date.

The payment deadline is extended to two weeks before the camp starts. Of course you can still pay your fee in the standard deadline, which is a month before the start, if you feel ready.

You can also choose **INTEREST-FREE instalments** in order not to spend a large sum of money at once. In this case we are as flexible as we can to adjust to your individual needs. For example, you can choose to participate in a camp in August that costs 365 Pounds and start paying your instalments in March, about 61 Pounds per month.

If you feel that you may have difficulties with meeting deadlines or any other criteria, don't hesitate to contact us – we are sure that together we will find an optimal solution. In Wild Areas Network we understand that it is essential to help each other in this challenging situation affecting us all.

Entire Wild Areas Network Team would like to Thank You for your will to participate in our field research project even in this difficult reality. You and all applying Volunteers represent a very inspiring and uplifting attitude, that is the source of our Motivation. We are grateful for your Support.

Stay safe, watch your Health and help your Loved Ones.



Your questions answered

Do I have to know a lot about palaeontology to participate?

You don't have to be an expert! Palaeontological knowledge can be gained on the site. There are persons who help in the research not mainly for fossils – they want to reconnect with nature or be a part of friendly community. Apart from Palaeontologists, our Volunteers are astronomers, businessmen, farmers, teachers, journalists and people from all walks of life.

Can I collect found fossils as souvenirs? Generally all material found during the works is the property of European Palaeontology Center and thus cannot be taken away. However, if found fossil doesn't have a significant scientific value, you can obtain the permission to take it. On the other hand, **if you find something really valuable**, your name will be shown together with the material on our expositions. Your name can be also mentioned in the acknowledgements section in corresponding scientific papers or you even can be a co-author if you are interested in further cooperation.

What to bring?

All-weather clothing. The temperatures can be very high in July, but there can also be some cold nights. You should definitely have a polar fleece and wind-proof jacket as well as comfortable hiking/working boots. You should have thick socks and spare set of clothes in case you get wet. Another important thing is a head cover, protecting you from the sun. Comfy trousers and worn-out T-shirts that can be used for working without worries that they will get dirty. Sleeping bag is a must. Another important stuff is a head-torch or a small torch. It will be useful to take a sunscreen and insect repellent. We don't have midges, but there are mosquitoes and ticks. You can also take a hand sanitizer, although there is water and soap on the site. Don't forget the electricity plugin adapter, mug, spoon. If you can, please take your own geological hammer.

What is provided on the site?

Accommodation in a comfortable bungalow, intensive training and equipment. The food is not covered. Majority of the working gear is provided, such as helmets, brushes, pickaxe, screwdrivers. However, it is useful to have your own geological hammer if it's possible.



Health & Safety tips

Bring a proof of your insurance with you, European Health Insurance Card is the best option.

Report any allergies or diseases to us before you arrive. Take all necessary medicaments that you use. First aid kit is on site, but it contains only basic supplies.

Beware of ticks. In Poland they transmit borreliosis and Tick Borne Encephalitis. There's a vaccination against TBE and it is recommended that you vaccinate yourself. If you notice a tick on your skin, you should remove it as soon as possible. Shower everyday is a good idea – ticks will be removed by the running water. It's difficult to spot them regarding their size – below is an image of a tick on a grass stem.

Sosnowsky's hogweed (*Heracleum sosnowskyi*) is a poisonous plant that you might encounter in Poland. Don't touch it – it causes severe burns. It is a tall, impressive umbellifer, reaching up to 4 meters of height.

Don't forget to wash hands before eating – you will have constant contact with soil, dirt, dust etc.

Take sunscreen, water and head cover with you – Summers in Poland are hot, dry and sunny and we will be performing physical tasks outdoors. Drink a lot of water during the day.



Camp factfile

Contact Person in UK:	Joanna Chmielewska info@wildareas.net +48 697 148 121 1 Old Union Street Dumfries DG1 2BQ United Kingdom
Camp location:	Krasiejow near Opole, Opolskie Voivodeship, POLAND
Available dates:	26.07.2021 – 04.08.2021 07.08.2021 – 16.08.2021
Camp language:	English
Meeting point and time	Opole Głowne Railway Station, Opole City Center
Polish contact details:	Uniwersytet Opolski, Europejskie Centrum Paleontologii ul. Oleska 48 45-052 Opole, POLAND www.ecp.uni.opole.pl

Our location in Poland



Opole and Krasiejow