

DENMARK: WHERE THEY ALL SOONER OR LATER END UP

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Denmark is a young country, most of the landscape being covered by glaciers until 12.000 years ago. The shape and size of the country has also changed, as in the first period following glaciation the north European lowland was connected to e.g. England and Sweden. Later this was followed by a rise in sea level, which drowned vast areas and left Denmark as a peninsula with a considerable number of larger and smaller islands.

Since the latest glaciation mammal species has colonized Denmark, some has left again and still some are in the process of colonizing. The Danish Mammal Atlas in 2007 published the distribution of 60 terrestrial species, and demonstrated for these species the importance of island size and distance to nearest coast.

Recent research has pointed to several possible glacial refugia from which Denmark has been colonized by small mammals, e.g. in Central Europe, the Iberian Peninsula, the Italian Peninsula and Balkan. Within Denmark, however, little is known about which factors that shaped the distribution patterns we meet today, be it geographical barriers, vegetation patterns, human intervention or climatic factors.

The presentation discusses these patterns for a number of small mammal species, with special reference to the yellow-necked field mouse, *Apodemus flavicollis*, striped field mouse, *Apodemus agrarius*, house mouse, *Mus musculus*, and birch mouse, *Sicista betulina*.