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THE COVER

The assemblage of mammals in Egypt has declined in species diversity over the past 10,000 years. Using clues from archaeology and paleontology, ecologists have pieced together the food web of larger-bodied mammals present before, during and after the rise agricultural societies in ancient Egypt. In "Modern Lessons from Ancient Food Webs" (pages 188-195,) Justin D. Yeakel and Jennifer A. Dunne describe the underlying structure that appears to be consistent in food webs across space and time, as well as how we can better predict their instability or recovery after major die-offs. In the case of Egypt, as the climate became more arid and human densities increased, the food web lost of its midsize herbivores, such as gazelles, that feed many different species of carnivore. The loss of those remaining could result in domino-effect extinctions. In this illustrations, artist Dominique Navarro depicts several of the mammals once present in Egypt (and some that still are) during the African Humid Period. Navarro recently illustrated the American University in Cairo Press Nature Foldouts on Egyptian flora and fauna.