

ONCE BITTEN TWICE SHY: PREDATOR TOOTHMARKS ON OREODONT (MAMMALIA: MERYCOIDODONTOIDEA) SKULLS, MIDDLE AND UPPER OLIGOCENE BRULE FORMATION OF SOUTH DAKOTA AND NEBRASKA

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Crania of the oreodont *Merycoidodon* in RTM and BHIGR collections bear evidence of predator tooth punctures piercing the dorsal skull roof region. The skulls preserve either solitary healed or single/multiple unhealed lesions (one healed, one not), indicating that this individual survived one predation attempt only to perish later under similar circumstances. Healed lesions show non-infectious, mild reactive bone growth around the punctured area. Puncture sizes, and a review of the well documented local carnivore and omnivore fauna indicate several predator-types were responsible, one possibly the oreodont, *Hyaenodon horridus*. If true, these specimens confirm earlier speculations that *Hyaenodon* was an active, cursorial predator. The usefulness of palaeopathological studies towards the interpretation of predator/pre interrelationships is demonstrated.

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