

# The Sahara Wasn't Always a Desert

Curious Cat Science and Engineering Blog

## [Green Sahara](#) [1]

For much of the past 70,000 years, the Sahara has closely resembled the desert it is today. Some 12,000 years ago, however, a wobble in the Earth's axis and other factors caused Africa's seasonal monsoons to shift slightly north, bringing new rains to an area nearly the size of the contiguous United States. Lush watersheds stretched across the Sahara, from Egypt to Mauritania, drawing animal life and eventually people.

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by some 3,500 years ago the desert had returned. The people vanished.

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The twilight of the Green Sahara around 4,500 years ago might have been the perfect time to be hunting at Gobero, said Carlo Giraudi, the team's geologist. As water sources dried up throughout the region, animals would have been drawn to pocket wetlands, making them easier to kill. Four middens found on the dunes and dated to around that time included hundreds of animal remains, as well as fish bones and clamshells—not usually part of a herder's diet. "The Green Sahara's climate was rapidly changing," said Giraudi, "but just before the lake dried up, the people at Gobero would have thought they were living in a golden period."

There are many values of science: letting our curious minds learn, giving us [cool robots](#) [2] and [gadgets](#) [3] and letting us learn about the past (and thus about the ever-changing world we live in).

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