

Homo habilis/Homo rudolfensis

"Handy Man" reconstruction
Artist: William Munns

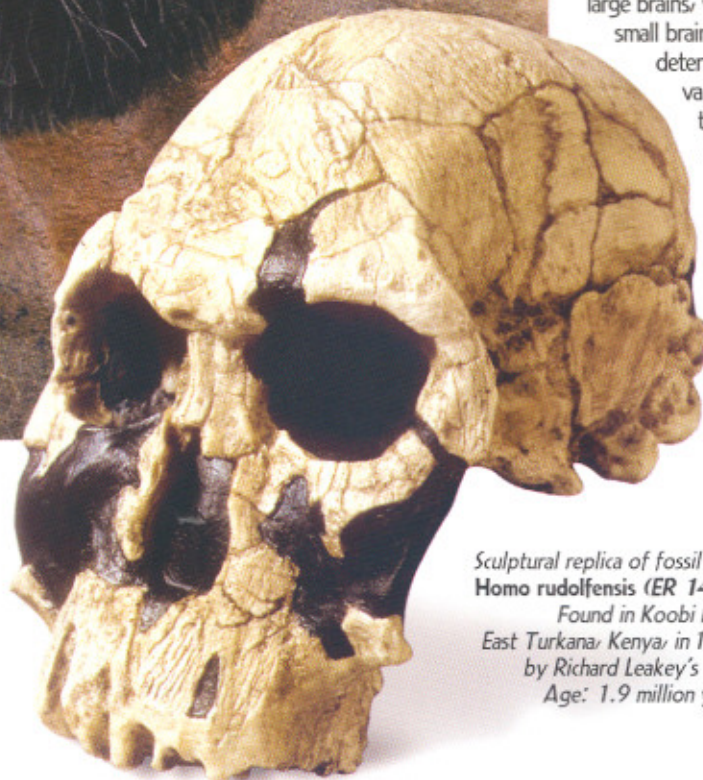
Sculptural replica of fossil skull
Homo habilis (ER 1813)
Found in Koobi Fora,
East Turkana, Kenya,
in 1973 by Richard Leakey's team
Age: 1.9 million years



Homo habilis and *Homo rudolfensis* are early representatives of the genus *Homo*, the group to which modern humans belong. They evolved in what is now East Africa.

There is some debate about whether fossils first identified as *Homo habilis* are one species or two. Some specimens had small teeth and large brains, while others had large teeth and small brains. More fossils are needed to determine if these features are due to variation in one species or if they are the features of two different species, *Homo habilis* and *Homo rudolfensis*.

The word "*habilis*" means handy or skillful, and so *Homo habilis* means "handy man." This species was so named because stone tools have been found near *Homo habilis* fossils. *Homo habilis* lived in East Africa over 2 million years ago, at the same time as other hominid species.



Sculptural replica of fossil skull
Homo rudolfensis (ER 1470)
Found in Koobi Fora,
East Turkana, Kenya, in 1972
by Richard Leakey's team
Age: 1.9 million years