

# EXTINCT PRIMATES

Humans are among more than 200 species of primates living on Earth today—one of the latest products of a long history of primate evolution. But over the past 65 million years, many now-extinct primate species flourished around the world. As groups adapted to different environments, they began to acquire features and abilities that persist in many of their varied descendants, including ourselves.

The evolution of the primates is written in the fossil record. Each of the five fossil species displayed below the mural (right) is representative of the primates living at a particular moment over the past 56 million years. Together, these examples reveal the development of features that are characteristic of living primates—for instance, grasping hands and feet, relatively large brains and keen eyesight.

