# State Fossil

Univ of MI Exhibit Museum of Natural History

## MASTODON

From 20,000 years ago until about 10,000 years ago, when they became extinct, the elephant-like Mastodons roamed Michigan's Ice Age landscape. Dining on leaves, pines, and acorns, these creatures grew nine feet tall and stretched 15 feet from tusk to tail. They may have weighed as much as six tons. Mastodon fossil sites have been found in every county in the Lower Peninsula. Over 250 Mastodon remains have been discovered; and recently, near Saline, scientists discovered the only set of Mastodon footprints known to exist in the world. In recognition of the importance of gaining knowledge of this ancient mammal, the Legislature designated the Mastodon (*Mammut americanum*) as the official State Fossil of Michigan.

*(Public Act 162 of 2002)*

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This rendering shows the comparison in size of the ancient Mastodon to modern man. Mastodons were similar to elephants today but were covered in thick body hair and had smaller ears.