

LICHENS ON BONES: AN UNUSUAL SUBSTRATUM

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The growth of lichens on bone remains has been scarcely addressed. Bones are an unusual substratum in nature. They used to last shortly because of fast weathering and destruction. However, in areas with extreme environment, such as Arctic or Antarctic regions, with low degradation rates allow a large endurance of bones, becoming an available substrate for lichens. During a survey carried in the Varanger peninsula in Finmark (Norway), several bone remains and horns were collected showing lichen colonization. These findings were seldom seen, just on five over 23 localities visited. The identification had yielded a list of 25 taxa, 24 lichen-forming fungi and one lichenicolous fungus. Half the number of lichens are included in *Lecanora s.l.* and *Caloplaca s.l.* Two thirds of the identified lichens are saxicolous species, mainly calcicolous. Lichens usually colonizing soil, mosses or plant debris are also well represented growing on bones.