

Topic: Glacial History

The Earth's glacial history goes nearly all the way back to the beginning of the planet. There have been many glacial periods (ice ages) in the last 600 million years.

Maybe the most important glacial periods are the ones that have taken place within the last 1.6 million years. This period is known as the Quaternary Period and is subdivided into two time periods called epochs.

The time after the last glaciation, 10,000 years ago until the present, is known to as the Holocene Epoch. It is important to note that geologists talk about time in terms of years from the present back into time, and written as "years before present or ybp".

Before the last glacial period, 110 000 ybp, there was an interglacial period (time between glacial periods) with a climate similar to the one we have today. That time period was called Eemian.

During the present warm Holocene period, there were many times with near glacial conditions. The most famous of these took place from the 14th to the 19th centuries when much of the world experienced cooler temperatures and drier conditions.