

# Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

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Florida Fish and Wildlife flickr

The legs of animals are more often than not their most significant body part. Whether they are using them to charge after prey or escape a predator, it is imperative that the legs function well. Just like there are differences in human arms and legs, quadrupeds, or mammals that walk on four legs, have similar differences. The bones are shaped entirely different but the general makeup of the entire arm, or front foot and leg, or hindfoot is the same. Usually the THPO Archaeology Department recovers the larger portions of the animal limbs because they are sturdier and can hold up better against the elements. However, this month's artifact features a rarely found bone from the leg: the patella.

The patella, or kneecap, is a hard knobby bone that is surrounded by ligaments and muscle. It acts as a barrier to the hinge joint that is created by the femur (upper leg/thigh bone) and the tibia (lower leg/shin bone). When an animal starts to run, ligaments supported by the patella pull on the shin bone. The patella in this case belongs to one of the most skittish animals in Florida: the deer. The Collections team has identified many different deer bones over the years but this is the first time for a patella. This bone helps a deer get up to speeds of 35-40 mph.



Schimming et al 2015



Rochester flickr 2014

