Summary:

The site of Duinefontein in South Africa shows some characteristics of MSA/MP peoples in Africa. Duinefontein is broken up into two sections with most of the work and research coming from Duinefontein 2. Duinefontein 2 was discovered by accident with a bulldozer. The archaeologists then dug a trench and when this happened, there were numerous stone artifacts and animal bones protruding from the trench walls. This showed clearly that the bones and stone tools occurred in situ in direct association on what appeared to be an ancient land surface. On this ancient land of Duinefontein 2, the presence of hominids is demonstrated by the occurrence of stone tools, but the use of these stone tools on animal bones is hard to determine. The bones at this site have no traces of cutting, butchering, or any other damage from stone tools. And there are no traces of hearths or home bases. Thus, this site might have been a kill site or a campsite with no fire. We see a few examples of these sites through the MSA that show little presence of modernity.

Excavation:

The site of Duinefontein 1 and 2 were excavated beginning in 1973 with ongoing excavations continuing through the publication of this article. It was a small site in Africa that was excavated by Richard Klein and his wife, G. Avery and K. Scott. The site contained many animal bones with a few stone tools, but with no hominid bones explaining that this site could have been a kill site or even possibly a campsite.
Location:

Duinefontein is located in South Africa on the continent of Africa and is located 50 km north of Cape Town. This is an open-air site. The immediate vicinity of the site is heavily vegetated, but the coastal strip several kilometers north and south of the site is largely unvegetated drift sand. And within the sand, there are several patches where animal bones were polished by the blowing sand.

Dates:

The dating at this site is very hard to establish. There is no material at Duinefontein that is well suited to radiometric age determination. The artifacts discovered at this site include mostly unretouched flakes. This could be called the Middle Stone Age. Comparable materials in other regions of South Africa are well dated and seem to be older than 40,000 years. The fauna at this site constitutes the principal source of dating. By looking at the fauna in Duinefontein and comparing it with another site only 65 km away (Elandsfontein), archaeologists have concluded that this site might be as old as 125,000 years. Thus, this site could be dated as young as 40,000 years (Upper Pleistocene) to as old as 125,000 years (Middle Pleistocene).

Paleo-Environments:

This site might have contained more than one environment in the past for ancient animals and hominids. First, the best represented species of animals at Duinefontein are the buffalo, wildebeest and the horse. These animals were probably grazers. But this site does not contain extensive strands of grass and this site would have been more suitable for browsers, such as the
grysbok and the duiker. This suggests that the larger grazers came to hunt upon the smaller browsers and while that happened the hominids would have attacked the larger grazers and had themselves a good feast. Second, numerous small bones of toads were found here suggesting that this site contained a marsh at one time where large animals hung out and might have been killed while they were drinking or sleeping. Today the environment is about the same as it was in the past, but with much cooler winters and more cities and people in that area of Africa.

**Artifacts:**

The only reference made to artifacts in this article about Duinefontein is that it mostly contained unretouched flakes that are labeled as Middle Stone Age. The animal bones at this site display no traces of cutting, butchering, or any other damage caused by stone tools. This suggests that Duinefontein was not a site about stone tools and artifacts but rather a site concerning animal bones.

**Food Remains:**

There were many animal remains found at this site and not many plant remains. Animal remains found at this site include the grysbok and reedbuck. Carnivores include the jackal, hyena and the lion and gazers such as the buffalo, wildebeest and the horse. There are also antelope, mongoose, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, seal and toad remains found in the general area of this site. The site has many animals’ bones and not too many stone tools or artifacts.

**Activity Areas:**
There is no evidence for the use of hearths or pits at Duinefontein. No structures or cultural features were found at this site. The excavations show that the bones were not evenly spread through the sand, but were concentrated in tunnel-like pockets 50 cm or more across. One of these pockets contained many hyena bones and might have represented a hyena lair. This site has a couple of levels (called horizons in this article) that suggests that this site might have been re-used. Since many animal bones were discovered here, this sight might have been a place for hominids to come back too when they were hungry to hunt on the larger animals that were either here to find food for themselves or to drink from the marsh.