

Now, earthworm poop can help reveal climate history

DSTs
past

London: Earthworm poop could provide a window into past climates, allowing scientists to piece together the prevailing weather conditions thousands of years ago, researchers say.

A laboratory study by scientists from the Universities of Reading and York has demonstrated that balls of calcium carbonate (small lumps of chalk-like material) excreted by the earthworm *Lumbricus terrestris* maintain a memory of the temperature at which they were formed.

This means that calcite granules, commonly record-



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WINDOW TO PAST WEATHER

ed at sites of archaeological interest, have the potential to reveal information about past

climates which could be used to enhance and benchmark climate change models, according to the study published in the journal *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta*. "These chalk balls will allow us to reconstruct temperatures for specific time intervals in which they were formed. Reconstructions like this are interesting for archaeologists, because they give a climatic context to their finds," said lead author Dr Emma Versteegh from the Department of Geography and Environmental Science at the University of Reading. P11