Identifying Subsistence Strategies in the Archaeological Record

There are many ways of identifying subsistence strategies archaeologically. Foragers, for example, are usually distinguished in part by a wide variety of wild plants and animals as food refuse. Since foragers usually live in small groups, create temporary settlements, and are egalitarian, evidence of these factors can also be used to support inferences of foraging.

Because foragers are relatively mobile, archaeologists are often interested in determining in which season a site was used. The primary way of doing this is to look for the presence of seasonal plants in a site. The presence of migratory animals also allows for inferences.

Figure 6.2

Pastoralists
Pastoralism began more than 10,000 years ago. Pictured here is a Turkana woman in Kenya, watering livestock from a waterhole dug in the sand. 
Credit: © John Warburton-Lee Photography/Alamy

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