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Dozens of dino footprints found in Mexico

Tracks go back as far as 110 million years, scientists say

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INAH / EPA

A photo from the Laboratories and Academic Support of the National Coordination of Archaeology of Mexico, or INAH, shows a dinosaur footprint surrounded by stones. INAH says at least 40 footprints of three different dinosaur species were found in a desert region of central Mexico.

REUTERS

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MEXICO CITY - A Mexican man has discovered dozens of dinosaur footprints dating back up to 110 million years along the banks of a dried river, scientists said Tuesday.

Biologist Oscar Polaco said the footprints, found by a local resident in a desert region in central Mexico, belonged to three prehistoric species that came to drink water in the area, once a swampy zone close to the sea.

Polaco said more studies needed to be done to determine what species of dinosaur the fossilized prints, each one up to 24 inches (60 centimeters) across, belonged to.

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"At the moment we can confirm these are footprints that belong to dinosaurs that lived during the early Cretaceous (period)," the scientist said.

The early Cretaceous period began about 144 million years ago, and followed on from the late Jurassic period. The Cretaceous period is considered the last period before dinosaurs disappeared from Earth about 65 million years ago.

The footprints are spread across land belonging to a local cooperative, whose members have built a fence round the site to protect it.

Last year scientists identified 30 other dinosaur prints in the same

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region, an area famous for the large numbers of fossils deposited there.

The prints found in 2006 belonged to a 66-foot-long (20-meter-long) animal that weighed between 30 tons and 40 tones, with a small head, long neck and heavy feet. Mexican researchers say those prints may have been made by an apatosaurus, also known as a brontosaurus.



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