Beat: Miscellaneous

Scientists identify first dinosaur species from the Arabian Peninsula

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USPA News - An international team of paleontologists has uncovered the first record of dinosaurs from Saudi Arabia, making it the first time that dinosaur species that lived in the Arabian Peninsula have been identified, Swedish scientists announced on Tuesday. The teeth and bones were found during excavations along the coast of the Red Sea in the northwestern part of Saudi Arabia.

The fossils are believed to be approximately 72 million years old, dating back to a time when the Arabian landmass was largely underwater and formed the north-western coastal margin of the African continent. "Dinosaur fossils are exceptionally rare in the Arabian Peninsula, with only a handful of highly fragmented bones documented this far," said Dr. Benjamin Kear of Uppsala University in Sweden. "This discovery is important not only because of where the remains were found, but also because of the fact that we can actually identify them." The discovery of shed teeth from a carnivorous theropod and a string of vertebrae from the tail of a huge Brontosaurus-like sauropod represent the first formally identified dinosaur fossils from Saudi Arabia. "Indeed, these are the first taxonomically recognizable dinosaurs reported from the Arabian Peninsula," Kear added. Dr. Tom Rich of Museum Victoria in Australia explained that dinosaur remains from the Arabian Peninsula and the area east of the Mediterranean Sea are rare because sedimentary rocks deposited in streams and rivers during the `Age of Dinosaurs` are hard to find, especially in Saudi Arabia. "The hardest fossil to find is the first one. Knowing that they occur in a particular area and the circumstances under which they do, makes finding more fossils significantly less difficult," Rich added, indicating that more dinosaur fossils may soon be discovered in the same region, which was once a beach littered with the bones and teeth of ancient marine reptiles and dinosaurs.

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