Fossil Discovery Unveils Powerful Triassic Crocodile Relative

Description

CT scans of an ancient specimen from the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History have identified a new species of crocodylomorph, a group that includes modern crocodiles, known for its strong jaws. This discovery provides a valuable look into ecological specialization during the Late Triassic period.

The creature, named *Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa*, lived around 210 million years ago by rivers and lakes in what is now New Mexico. It was a swift predator, equipped with large back legs for running and smaller arms. Its short snout and robust skull were adapted for catching large prey effectively.

Paleontologist Dr. Bhart-Anjan Bhullar explained that this finding highlights the early diversification of crocodile ancestors. During this time, two major groups of reptiles were competing for dominance: the ancestors of modern crocodiles and those that led to birds, including dinosaurs. The dinosaurs of this era were lightweight and bipedal, while early crocodiles were powerful, four-legged hunters.

The holotype specimen of *Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa* includes parts of its skull, jaw, vertebrae, limbs, and protective armour. Although excavated in 1948, it had not been fully examined until now. The analysis positions it early in the crocodylomorph evolution, indicating that these features developed at the beginning of their history.

Researchers highlight that this discovery shows the early stages of ecological niche partitioning among similar predators. The team's findings were published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* this month.

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What is the name of the newly identified species of crocodylomorph?
   - Option: Crocodylus acutus
   - Option: Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa
   - Option: Alligator mississippiensis
   - Option: Caiman crocodilus

2. How long ago did Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa live?
   - Option: 150 million years
   - Option: 210 million years

Option: 65 million years
Option: 500 million years

3. Which museum conducted the CT scans that identified the new species?

Option: Smithsonian National Museum
Option: Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History
Option: American Museum of Natural History
Option: Field Museum

4. What type of environment did Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa inhabit?

Option: Deserts
Option: Mountains
Option: Rivers and lakes
Option: Open plains

5. Who is the paleontologist that explained the significance of the finding?

Option: Dr. John Doe
Option: Dr. Jane Smith
Option: Dr. Bhart-Anjan Bhullar
Option: Dr. Emily White

6. In which publication were the findings about Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa published?

Option: Nature
Option: Science
Option: Proceedings of the Royal Society B
Option: PLOS One

True-False

7. Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa had large front legs and smaller back legs.

8. The holotype specimen of Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa had been fully examined in 1948.

9. During the Late Triassic period, the ancestors of modern crocodiles and birds were competing for dominance.

10. Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa was a slow-moving herbivore.

11. The findings about this species were made public in the current month.

12. The analysis of Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa places it early in crocodile evolution.

Gap-Fill

13. The creature Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa lived around 210 million years ago by rivers and _____.

14. The species Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa provides insight into ecological specialization during the _____ period.

15. Dr. Bhart-Anjan Bhullar highlighted the early _____ of crocodile ancestors.

16. The holotype specimen includes parts of its skull, jaw, _____, limbs, and protective armour.

17. Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa was equipped with large back legs for running and _____ arms.

18. The analysis indicates that these features developed at the beginning of their _____ history.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Eosphorosuchus lacrimosa 2. 210 million years 3. Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History 4. Rivers and lakes 5. Dr. Bhart-Anjan Bhullar 6. Proceedings of the Royal Society B
True-False: 7. False 8. False 9. True 10. False 11. True 12. True
Gap-Fill: 13. lakes 14. Late Triassic 15. diversification 16. vertebrae 17. smaller 18. evolution

CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL4

POST TAG

1. B2

2. crocodile
3. ESL learning
4. esl news
5. fossil
6. Level 4
7. museum
8. Triassic

Tags

1. B2
2. crocodile
3. ESL learning
4. esl news
5. fossil
6. Level 4
7. museum
8. Triassic

Date Created
2026/04/22
Author
aimeeyoung99