

New hoofed mammal fossil found

August 9 2006

A U.S. paleontologist has discovered the fossils of a new hoofed South American mammal that resembled a cross between a dog and a hare.

The fossils, which indicate the animal once roamed the Andes Mountains in southern Bolivia around 13 million years ago, were discovered by Case Western Reserve University Assistant Professor Darin Croft and a research associate at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

The animal belonged to a group of hoofed mammals native only to South America soon after dinosaurs became extinct. They evolved to include hundreds of species over a span of more than 50 million years; all of them are now extinct.

The fossil specimens were collected from the Quebrada Honda and Rio Rosario areas of Bolivia, near the border with Argentina. Croft plans to return to the Quebrada Honda site and do fieldwork next year to learn more about the newly discovered mammal and other new species that might be found there.

The project was supported by the National Science Foundation, the National Geographic Society and the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine.

Croft reports his find in the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*.

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Citation: New hoofed mammal fossil found (2006, August 9) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-08-hoofed-mammal-fossil.html>

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