

Dinosaur species innocent of cannibalism

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A U.S. paleontology student is being credited with discrediting a theory that the dinosaur species *Coelophysis bauri* practiced cannibalism.

Sterling Nesbitt, a graduate student at Columbia University, made the discovery while standing on a New York City subway platform at the American Museum of Natural History station and idly looking at a bronze cast on the wall of one of the museum's dinosaurs, The New York Times reported.

The dinosaur, whose remains were found in New Mexico in 1947, had bones in its stomach that were believed to have come from a cannibalized young dinosaur. But a re-examination of the bones -- prompted by Nesbitt's study of the bronze cast -- disproved that theory.

"Our research shows that the evidence for cannibalism in *Coelophysis* is non-existent," Nesbitt told the Times, "and the evidence for cannibalism in other dinosaurs is quite thin."

The bones of the dinosaur's last meal, lying inside the skeleton where its stomach would have been, were found not to be those of a juvenile *Coelophysis* or any other dinosaur, but, rather, the bones of a small crocodile.

The study appears in the journal *Biology Letters* of the Royal Society of London.

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