

Rare prehistoric pregnant turtle found in Utah

May 8 2009, By MIKE STARK , Associated Press Writer



This undated image provided Montana State University shows CT technician, Tanya Spence preparing to run a 75 million-year-old turtle fossil through a CT scanner at Deaconess Hospital in Bozeman, Mont. Paleontologists say a prehistoric turtle uncovered in a remote area of southern Utah is just the second ever found to still have a clutch of eggs inside. The fossil was found at Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in 2006 but scientists only recently discovered it had eggs inside. Scientists this week are examining CT scan images of the turtle taken in Montana. (AP Photo/Montana State University, Kelly Gorham)

(AP) -- Paleontologists say a 75-million-year-old turtle fossil uncovered in southern Utah has a clutch of eggs inside, making it the first prehistoric pregnant turtle found in the United States.

At least three [eggs](#) are visible from the outside of the [fossil](#), and Montana State University researchers this week have been studying

images taken from a CT scan in search of others inside.

Montana State graduate student Michael Knell says the turtle was probably about a week from laying her eggs when she died and became entombed for millions of years in sandstone.

The fossil was found in 2006 in a remote part of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The eggs weren't discovered until after it sat in storage for two years and was being re-examined by a volunteer.

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