

Infant crocodile fossils unearthed at Arlington Archosaur Site in North Arlington

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Paleontologists have found the partial skull of an infant crocodile at the Arlington Archosaur Site, a prolific fossil site in North Arlington. The young reptile's skull is a tiny version of the adult skull found at the site last summer. The juvenile snout is three centimeters long, slightly over one inch, compared to the adult snout which was over 15 centimeters. The crocodiles lived nearly 100 million years ago.

In addition to the partial snout, crews have found baby scutes - the armored plates that cover the backs of [crocodiles](#) - teeth and tiny limb bones, said Derek Main, The University of Texas at Arlington dinosaur lecturer who heads the project.

"We haven't found the whole baby yet, but the discovery is really exciting. It's the first discovery of juvenile crocs from this time frame and this region," Main said.

To date more dinosaur fossils have been recovered from the Arlington Archosaur Site, where excavation began about two years ago, than from any other site in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The site lies within Cretaceous rocks, formed 95 million years ago when Arlington was the beachhead for a giant sea that divided the continent.

The site has yielded fossils from various species of animals, including [dinosaurs](#). A skeleton of a large herbivorous "duck billed" dinosaur was excavated from the northern hillside at the site. Crocodile fossils are among the most commonly found.

Main said the site is unique because it is a major dinosaur excavation in the middle of a large metropolitan setting and it preserves many fossils from different animals. The site also has fossils from turtles, lungfish, fish and sharks. The excavation of the Arlington Archosaur Site began in the spring of 2008 when the Huffines Group obtained the property and granted land access to UT Arlington.

Provided by University of Texas at Arlington

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