

Mastodon skull discovered in Chile

May 18 2011



A visitor reads about the mastodon skeleton at the National History Museum of Los Angeles County, in 2010. A perfectly preserved skull of a mastodon -- a relative of today's elephant -- was found here during excavation work at a water treatment plant, one of the scientists involved in the discovery said Tuesday.

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"This is the remains of a gomphothere (mastodon) skull in optimal

condition," paleontologist Rafael Labarca told AFP about the discovery of the animal, which had two to four tusks and died out 10,000 years ago.

The remains were discovered on February 15 during work to expand a water treatment plant in Santiago by the French firm Suez and Aguas Chilean Andes.

A [mastodon](#) shoulder blade and lower jaw were discovered in 2008 in southern Chile, but this is the first time Chilean [paleontologists](#) have discovered a complete skull, Labarca said.

The research, funded by France's Suez and conducted under the supervision of the National [Museum of Natural History](#), expects to have information by the end of the year on the lifestyle and migratory movements of the animal.

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