

Scientists find ancient fossils in Panama

April 27 2013



Part of a jawbone thought to belong to an extinct type of horse called 'Anchitherium clarencei' found by paleontologists during a project to recover fossils during the Panama Canal expansion, is displayed after a news conference in Panama City, Friday, April 26, 2013. A group of scientists and paleontologists have completed a project with the Panama Canal Authority to recover the fossils of at least ten new species of animals that inhabited the earth millions of years ago. (AP Photo/Arnulfo Franco)

U.S. and Panamanian paleontologists have discovered fossils of several species that lived in Panama more than 20 million years ago.

Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute [paleontologist](#) Bruce MacFadden says in a statement the discovery will help to better understand the biodiversity and [geological formation](#) of the Central American isthmus during the Tertiary Period.

The Smithsonian and the Panama Canal Authority began a joint effort five years ago to look for and dig up samples of fossils, rocks, shells and driftwood in the area of the Panama Canal.



A man looks at the bones of a 'Dioplotherium,' an extinct type of marine mammal found by paleontologists during a project to recover fossils during the Panama Canal expansion, is displayed after a news conference in Panama City, Friday, April 26, 2013. A group of scientists and paleontologists have completed a project with the Panama Canal Authority to recover fossils of at least ten new species of animals that inhabited the earth millions of years ago. (AP Photo/Arnulfo Franco)

Among other things, the scientists found pieces of teeth that belonged to an extinct giant shark and jaw fragments of a small horse that lived in the same area millions of years ago.

The discoveries were announced Friday.



People look at a part of a jawbone thought to belong to an extinct type of horse called 'Anchitherium clarencei' found by paleontologists during a project to recover fossils during the Panama Canal expansion, is displayed after a news conference in Panama City, Friday, April 26, 2013. A group of scientists and paleontologists have completed a project with the Panama Canal Authority to recover fossils of at least ten new species of animals that inhabited the earth millions of years ago. (AP Photo/Arnulfo Franco)



Fossilized bones of a 'Dioplotherium' an extinct type of marine mammal found by paleontologists during a project to recover fossils during the Panama Canal expansion, is displayed after a news conference in Panama City, Friday, April 26, 2013. A group of scientists and paleontologists have completed a project with the Panama Canal Authority to recover fossils of at least ten new species of animals that inhabited the earth millions of years ago. (AP Photo/Arnulfo Franco)



A fossilized tree leaf found by paleontologists during a project to recover fossils during the Panama Canal expansion, is displayed after a news conference in Panama City, Friday, April 26, 2013. A group of scientists and paleontologists have completed a project with the Panama Canal Authority to recover fossils of at least ten new species of animals that inhabited the earth millions of years ago. (AP Photo/Arnulfo Franco)



A seashell found by paleontologists during a project to recover fossils during the Panama Canal expansion, is displayed after a news conference in Panama City, Friday, April 26, 2013. A group of scientists and paleontologists have completed a project with the Panama Canal Authority to recover fossils of at least ten new species of animals that inhabited the earth millions of years ago that were found during the expansion of the Panama Canal. (AP Photo/Arnulfo Franco)



A tooth of an extinct giant shark called 'Carcharodon megalodon' found by paleontologists during a project to recover fossils during the Panama Canal expansion, is displayed after a news conference in Panama City, Friday, April 26, 2013. A group of scientists and paleontologists have completed a project with the Panama Canal Authority to recover fossils of at least ten new species of animals that inhabited the earth millions of years ago. (AP Photo/Arnulfo Franco)

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