

New giant raptor discovered in South Dakota

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A research team led by a University of Kansas alumnus has identified a new giant raptor, the largest specimen ever found with wing feathers.

Named *Dakotaraptor*, the fossil from the Hell Creek Formation in South Dakota is thought to be about 17 feet long, making it among the largest raptors in the world.

"This new predatory dinosaur also fills the body size gap between

smaller theropods and large tyrannosaurs that lived at this time," KU Paleontologist and co-author David Burnham said.

Robert DePalma, curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Palm Beach Museum of Natural History and lead author of the research, led the expedition to South Dakota where the specimen was found. At the time, he was a graduate student studying with former KU paleontology professor and curator Larry Martin, who died in 2014.

"This Cretaceous period [raptor](#) would have been lightly built and probably just as agile as the vicious smaller theropods, such as the Velociraptor," De Palma said. He added that the both fossils showed evidence of "quill knobs" where feathers would have been attached to the forearm of the dinosaur.

This also demonstrates that flightlessness evolved several times in this lineage leading to modern birds.

The peer-reviewed research was published Oct. 30 in *Paleontological Contributions*.



More information: Robert A. DePalma et al. The first giant raptor (Theropoda: Dromaeosauridae) from the Hell Creek Formation, *Paleontological Contributions* (2015). [DOI: 10.17161/paleo.1808.18764](https://doi.org/10.17161/paleo.1808.18764)

Provided by University of Kansas

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