

Dino Highway



Experts have long known that an area of Bolivia is filled with dinosaur footprints. Bolivia is a country in South America. But no one knew how many—until now.

This past December, a team of scientists announced that the area is home to about 16,600 dino footprints! That's the most ever found in a single location. The team had spent years counting them all.

Experts say the site was once a muddy dinosaur highway. Millions of years ago, a group of dinosaurs called theropods stomped through it. Theropods walked on two feet. Most had three toes on each foot.

The largest prints are about 12 inches long. Scientists say they could have been made by a medium-sized theropod like

Allosaurus (a-luh-SAWR-uhs). It weighed about 6,000 pounds. The smallest tracks are about 4 inches long. They may belong to a small dino like *Coelophysis* (see-loh-FIE-sis). It weighed just 60 pounds.

Raúl Esperante is the **paleontologist** who led the team. He says scientists can learn a lot from dinosaur tracks. For example, footprints can help experts figure out how fast dinos moved. The tracks in Bolivia show that many of the dinosaurs were walking, not running.

“Footprints give us information that the bones do not give,” Esperante says.

—by Alicia Green

Word to Know

paleontologist *noun.* a scientist who studies plants and animals that lived millions of years ago



A scientist examines dinosaur tracks in Bolivia.