

Beast of Five Teeth

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In News: Recently, Fossil of a skunk-like mammal that lived during the age of dinosaurs has been discovered in Chilean Patagonia.

Beast of Five Teeth

- A part of the creature's fossilised jawbone with five teeth attached were discovered close to the famous Torres del Paine national park.
- The animal is named *Orretherium tzen*, meaning 'Beast of Five Teeth' in an amalgam of Greek and a local indigenous language in Chile.
- It is believed to be a mammal and is thought to have lived between 72 and 74 million years ago during the Upper Cretaceous period.

Significance of This Discovery

- The discovery was published in the journal *Scientific Reports* by experts from the University of Chile working with researchers from Argentina's Natural History and La Plata museums and the Chilean Antarctic Institute.
- Proof to recent evidence that mammals roamed that part of South America a lot earlier than previously thought.
- The finds are critical to completing the evolutionary puzzle of the Gondwanatheria, a group of long-extinct early mammals that coexisted with dinosaurs.
- This and other discoveries that we are going to make known in the future are revealing that there is enormous potential in terms of paleontology in the southern tip of Chile.
- The scientists think *Orretherium tzen* cohabited with *Magallanodon baikashkenke*, which was thought to have been an evolutionary step between a platypus or marsupial, and dinosaurs such as the long-necked

titanosaur.