

Dinosaur footprints in China

August 10, 2022

In news— Recently, scientists have discovered over 4,300 dinosaur footprints in Hebei province of Zhangjiakou in northern China.

Key findings-

- **This is the largest number of footprint fossils found in one spot in the country.**
- **The footprints were made between the Jurassic and Cretaceous ages**, around 150 million years ago.
- The footprints **show four different dinosaur species**, one of which might be undiscovered.
- Newly discovered footprints **belong to herbivores and carnivorous dinosaurs**; while the former could reach lengths of nearly 15 metres, the latter was four to five metres.
- Scientists believe the **area may have attracted dinosaurs due to the availability of water and trees at the time.**
- Though announced last month, the discovery was made in 2020, and since then, scientists have been carrying out 3D imaging of the footprints and casting molds of them.
- **Preserved footprints, also known as ichnites, are trace fossils** that have survived millions of years. These are **found in earthen materials** that were soft enough to form the foot impression and hard enough to retain it.
- **Over time, the material dried, hardened, and was covered with layers of sediment, helping the impression become fossilised.** In numerous instances, soil erosion is now bringing them to the surface.

Dinosaur footprints in other places-

- While several dinosaur fossils and footprints are believed to have been found in Europe and North America in the 1700s, these were declared to be remains of very

large birds or biblical giants.

- **The first dinosaur footprints in the United States were reportedly found in 1800 by Pliny Moody** on his farm in Connecticut. About one foot long, scientists at the time identified the prints as that of **Noah's Raven, referring to the Bible.**
- **In the 1820s, fossil footprints were reported from Cheshire, England, in Triassic rocks.** The **earliest written record of fossil footprints**, these are now referred to as the ichnogenus *Chirotherium*. Since then, dinosaur footprints have been discovered across the world.
- **In 2017, in the French village of Plagne, scientists uncovered the world's longest dinosaur tracks**, measuring more than 150 metres. It was said to be made by a dinosaur that was at least 35 metres long and weighed 35 tonnes.
- **In India, in 2014, footprints dating back 200-million-years were found in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.**

Further

reading:

<https://journalsofindia.com/footprints-of-3-dinosaur-species-found-in-thar-desert/>