

Natovenator polydontus

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In news– Recently, scientists said that the dinosaur, called Natovenator polydontus, lived about 72 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period.

About Natovenator polydontus-

- The expansive dinosaur group that included big predators such as T. rex also was populated by a number of oddballs, weirdos and outcasts.
- A newly described dinosaur from Mongolia – the size of a goose and looking a bit like one, too – fits that description.
- The scientists have found that it was built like a diving bird with a streamlined body while possessing a goose-like elongated neck and a long flattened snout with a mouth bearing more than 100 small teeth.
- It almost surely was covered in feathers.
- While it was a cousin of speedy little predator Velociraptor, **Natovenator was adapted to a semi-aquatic lifestyle in a freshwater ecosystem**, perhaps floating on rivers and lakes, paddling with its front limbs, and using its flexible neck to catch fish and insects or diving underwater to capture its prey.
- **Its well-preserved remains – a skeleton about 70% complete – were unearthed in the Gobi Desert**, which over the decades has been a treasure trove for dinosaur fossils.
- **Natovenator is part of the dinosaur group called theropods**, sharing traits including bipedalism – best known for large meat-eaters including Tyrannosaurus, Tarbosaurus and Giganotosaurus.
- But the theropods, many of which were feathered, branched out in unusual directions with examples such as long-clawed ground sloth-like Therizinosaurus, ostrich-like Struthiomimus, termite-eating Mononykus and the

entire bird lineage.

- Not many of the dinosaurs called “non-avian” – in other words, not the birds – are known to have lived a semi-aquatic lifestyle.
- A close relative of *Natovenator* named *Halszkaraptor*, described in 2017, lived a similar lifestyle at roughly the same time in the same region. Both had a very bird-like appearance and were closely related to the bird lineage.
- *Natovenator* measured about 18 inches (45 cm) long, with a skull about 3 inches (7 cm) long. Its front limbs appeared somewhat flattened, perhaps as an adaptation for paddling and swimming.
- The streamlining of its body is shown by ribs that point toward the tail, as in diving birds, an arrangement that reduces drag in the water and allows efficient swimming.
- There were various diving birds during the Cretaceous, including North America’s *Hesperornis*, which reached about 6 feet (1.8 meters) long, but none are known from the area *Natovenator* inhabited.