

Ornithopod Dinosaur Footprints

The only verified dinosaur footprint found along the Bass Coast is that of a medium sized theropod (meat-eating) dinosaur close to the Flat Rocks site, near Inverloch. However, in the Otways, ornithopod (plant-eating) dinosaur footprints have been found. The first ornithopod dinosaur footprint was found by Drs. Tom Rich and Pat Vickers-Rich at a remote locality called Knowledge Creek, west of Cape Otway Lighthouse, in 1980.

The next ornithopod footprint was discovered at Skene's Creek in 1989. It was not as obvious as the Knowledge Creek footprint, but clearly showed the three toed impression. A second partial foot print, which appeared to show an impression of the heel of a foot, was also collected.

More recently, fossil bird footprints, in association with a small theropod dinosaur footprint, have been found at Dinosaur Cove, west of Cape Otway. The slab of sandstone containing the bird tracks represents the oldest known avian footprints in Australia. The only other evidence of Cretaceous birds in Victoria comes from a handful of fossilised feathers from Koonwarra in the Strzelecki Ranges and a bird furcula or wish-bone from the Flat Rocks site on the Bass Coast.

References:

T.H. Rich and P. Vickers-Rich. 2000. **Dinosaurs in Darkness**. Indiana University Press pp.222.

A.J. Martin et al 2014. Oldest known avian footprints from Australia: Eumeralla Formation (Albian), Dinosaur Cove, Victoria. *Paleontology* Vol. 57, Issue 1, pp 7-19.



Ornithopod dinosaur footprint found by Drs. Tom Rich and Pat Vickers-Rich at Knowledge Creek in 1980.