

Eagle's Nest

Site #14 on the Strzelecki Taxonomy Map

Eagle's Nest, the site where Australia's first dinosaur bone was found, is situated approximately seven kilometres from Inverloch along the Cape Paterson/Inverloch coast road.

In 1903, William Ferguson, a field geologist with the Geological Survey of Victoria, was surveying Eagle's Nest looking for coal seams. He found what he originally thought was a fossil tooth and marked it on his map. That "tooth" turned out to be a claw from a medium sized carnivorous dinosaur, later referred to as the "Cape Paterson claw" – and Australia's first dinosaur bone!

However, it wasn't until more than 75 years later that a couple of Monash University students, and another field geologist, revisited Ferguson's site at Eagle's Nest and found more fossil bones.

Their initial success prompted one of them, Tim Flannery, to carry out a survey of the Bass Coast. His discovery of about sixty specimens over six months lead Tom Rich, Curator of Vertebrate Palaeontology at Museum Victoria and colleague Patricia Vickers-Rich of Monash University along with their students and colleagues to begin a systematic search of the Bass Coast and Otway coast, in an effort to find more fossil localities.

So began the resurgence of dinosaur hunting in Victoria. Although the focus of excavating on the Bass Coast has taken place at the Flat Rocks site, one kilometre north of Eagle's Nest, researchers periodically return to the site of the Cape Paterson claw. The most recent discovery was a dinosaur tibia (shin bone), found by Mike Cleeland at the base of the large rock stack.



Eagles Nest, Cape Paterson. Photographer: L.Kool



Cape Paterson claw. Photographer: S. Morton, Monash University.



Dinosaur tibia, found by Mike Cleeland at base of Eagle's Nest 2012. Photographer: L.Kool.