

First record of Lower Cretaceous dinosaur tracks (Sauropoda-Theropoda) in Rio Negro province, Patagonia, Argentina.

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Dinosaur trackways are very abundant on the west coast of the Ezequiel Ramos Mexía lake. All the localities discovered since 1979 were placed on the Neuquén border of the lake. The new locality with dinosaur trackways described here is placed at El Gigante (Río Negro Province). Tracks are in a red sandstone belonging to the Candeleros Member of the Río Limay Formation (Albian-Cenomanian?). Tracks are interpreted as belonging to Sauropod and theropod dinosaurs.

Sauropod tracks have poorly preserved foot and well preserved manus tracks. Manus tracks (20 to 60 cm width on different trackways) are crescent-shaped with the posterior border concave and anterior border convex. This morphology is similar to that recorded as *Sauropodichnus giganteus* found in the same geological unit. There are medium-sized theropod tracks, different to those described on the Neuquen border. Isolated tracks have 32 cm in length and 25 cm in width; however, some smaller are present. Digit III impression is twice longer and wider than digit II and IV. Digit II is the shortest with the claw impression strongly displaced inward. These theropod tracks probably belong to a new morphology not described before in the area. The discovery of these tracks is the first record of well preserved Cretaceous footprints in the Rio Negro Province, and they increase the knowledge of the Lower Cretaceous ichnofauna. Funding comes from National University of Comahue project T-013; San Jorge Oil Company, BID 802/OC-AR-PICT 97-07/01513.