

Scientists Discover Giant Frog Fossil



Do you ever see frogs near your home? Maybe you have even caught a frog with your hands or in a net. Most of the frogs you find probably fit in your hand. But did you know that, 70 million years ago, some frogs were the size of bowling balls?

Not long ago, scientists found fossils of a giant frog in Madagascar, an island country off the coast of Africa. They named the giant frog *Beelzebufo* (beel-zeh-boo-foe), which means Devil Toad. The giant frog weighed about 10 pounds and was about 16 inches long. The big frog had sharp teeth, a large mouth, and hard skin. Scientists think the frog might have been pretty fierce. The giant frog might even have been able to catch young dinosaurs, they said.

After studying the frog fossils, scientists were surprised to learn that *Beelzebufo* resembles frogs that now live in South America. But how could that be? Madagascar is many miles across the ocean from South America. How could the giant frog of Madagascar have traveled to South America? A long trip like that would be impossible because frogs cannot live for long in salt water.

Scientists believe that Madagascar and South America were connected at one time. Many scientists think that Madagascar and South America already had drifted apart when *Beelzebufo* was alive. But now they are rethinking that idea. Some are wondering if the two continents stayed together longer than they thought.

NEWS WORD BOX

evidence resemble
fierce continents
rethinking drifted

MORE FACTS ABOUT FROGS

- Scientists in Madagascar first found bones of an unusually large frog in 1993. It was only in the past year that they gathered enough bones to piece together *Beelzebufo*.
- The largest frog today, the Goliath frog of West Africa, can weigh up to 7 pounds.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

What other kinds of evidence -- besides giant frogs -- might scientists find to suggest that Madagascar and South America were once connected?