

Mini T. rex Fossil Surprises Scientists



A new fossil dinosaur is amazing scientists because it has so many of the same traits that *Tyrannosaurus rex* had. The new dino find -- which scientists are calling Raptorex -- has a big head, powerful jaws, tiny arms, and super strong legs. Those are just a few of the traits Raptorex and T. rex have in common.

Even though the two dinos are somewhat similar in appearance, there are two big differences between them. First, Raptorex lived 40 to 60 million years *before* T. rex. Second, Raptorex was a fraction of the size of the “king of carnivores.” While T. rex grew to be 40 feet long and weighed at least 5 tons, Raptorex was only 8 to 9 feet long and weighed about 150 pounds. Raptorex was only a bit larger than a human!

"The most interesting and important thing about this new fossil is that it is completely unexpected," said one scientist. "There's no other example that I can think of where an animal has been so finely designed at about one hundredth the size that it would become."

Another scientist called the new find a “pocket T. rex.”

Experts say Raptorex probably ate turtles and pig-sized plant-eating dinosaurs. It ran down its prey and used its huge jaw muscles to catch them.

The Raptorex skeleton was found in northeast China. It is in the United States now, where scientists are studying it. Soon it will be returned to China where it will be put on display in a museum near where it was found.

NEWS WORD BOX

traits	similar
fraction	carnivore
designed	hundredth

MORE RAPTOREX FACTS

- Scientists believe the fossil Raptorex was five or six years old when it died.
- They can tell from its brain that it had the same super sense of smell that T. rex had.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Why did one scientist call Raptorex a “pocket T. rex”?
What are some other things that have
very similar features but come in different sizes?