

Dinosaur Discovery

A new giant dinosaur species, called *Tyrannosaurus mcraeensis*, has been discovered in New Mexico, USA. Palaeontologists made the announcement after examining parts of the animal's fossilised skull that had been found at the Hall Lake Formation, a geological formation in Sierra County. The skull is currently on display at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science (NMMNHS). 'Once again, the extent and scientific importance of New Mexico's dinosaur fossils becomes clear – many new dinosaurs remain to be discovered in the state, both in the rocks and in museum drawers!' said Dr. Spencer Lucas, Paleontology Curator at NMMNHS. The massive carnivore, thought to have lived approximately five million years before the *Tyrannosaurus rex* (T. rex), is thought to be its closest relative! The huge theropods that lived between 71 and 73 million years ago, would have been similar in size to their relative the T. rex – 12m long, up to 4m high and weighing around 8.8 tonnes. Like the T. rex, their humongous skulls



Pictured: An image of *Tyrannosaurus mcraeensis* released by the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science. **Source:** NMMNHS Paleontology @NMMNHS_Paleo X page.

were balanced by their long, heavy tail. Discussing how the identification of the new species was made, Dr. Nick Longrich, a co-author of the study from the University of Bath, said, 'The differences are subtle, but that's typically the case in closely related species. Evolution slowly causes mutations to build up over millions of years, causing species to look subtly different over time.'

Scotland's 'biggest ever' snowball fight?

What started out as a joke between an Aberdeenshire couple, may have turned into Scotland's biggest ever snowball fight! During the heavy snowfall experienced this month, Roxanna Miskelly suggested that they organise a fun snowball fight at their local park in Inverurie for the community. The idea 'snowballed' on social media, and they created two teams out of the over 300 people, who met them at Strathburn Park! Organisers claim that this was Scotland's biggest snowball fight – there is no doubt that it was large, but no one knows how to prove this statement. The opposing teams were given three minutes to get their snowballs ready, before dramatic music started to play, indicating the beginning of the match. Organiser Roxanna said, 'It's been amazing - it started from a

kind of half-baked idea of 'wouldn't it be funny' and then 24 hours later, to potentially having Scotland's biggest snowball fight is unreal and it's been such a good atmosphere. As long as it snows - definitely an annual thing.' She also thanked Garioch Sports Centre, who turned on their floodlights and allowed them use of a generator to illuminate the event. Karla, who was there on the night said, 'It kind of lets you relive your youth a little bit. Us adults don't get to have this much fun and it's just something really wholesome that brings the community together.'

How do you think it would feel to be involved in a snowball fight with hundreds of people? How many people do you think have been in the largest snowball fight ever?



Pictured: The community fun snowball fight at Strathburn Park. **Source:** Garioch Sports Centre Facebook page.



Pictured: Playing in the snow. **Source:** Canva.

Why Wag?



Pictured: A Dog Walk. **Source:** Canva.

Researchers from Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in the Netherlands and the University of Rome have been looking into why dogs might wag their tails. The four scientists have recently published their results and some of them might surprise you! Most people think that dogs wag their tails when they are happy or excited, but this may, in some cases, show nervousness or submission. The scientists said they found that dogs wag their tails much more than other animals that are closely related to them, for example, wolves. Canines in the wild use their tails to improve their balance and to swat away insects. These experts looked at the existing research on tail-wagging and concluded that there may be two reasons why dogs wag their tails so much. The

first theory is that people intentionally selected dogs that wag their tails to breed because humans find the rhythm of it soothing and enjoyable. The second reason is a side effect of choosing to breed dogs with other desirable traits, such as tameness. Dr Taylor Hersh, a co-author of the article said 'We may not be able to take a time machine back to the beginning of the dog-human relationship, but we can look at dog behaviour today in tandem with human behaviour to try and understand what that domestication process looked like. Tail wagging is a very apparent and interesting behaviour to start with.'

Why do you think dogs wag their tails? Do you think being involved in research like this would be interesting?

Last week's topic:

Is an e-reader better than a book?



I think e-reader is better, because it helps the environment... and you can also read your books anywhere without having to carry a bunch of books around.

Jackie

Print reading is better.

Imaya

I think they are both good but in some cases a book is better like when you want to read sometimes everything about the book is better when you are on a plane an e-reader is best.

Janaya

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