

Survey finds 'Jurassic Park' in E. China



As many as 82 dinosaur fossil sites were confirmed by experts from Zhejiang Province between 2006 and 2013.[Photo: zjww.gov.cn]

East China's Zhejiang Province was a "Jurassic Park" with a wide variety of dinosaurs during the Cretaceous period, according to findings of a six-year survey.

A total 82 dinosaur fossil sites, with at least six dinosaur species and 25 types of fossil dinosaur eggs, were confirmed during the survey by a joint team of experts from the Zhejiang Institute of Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology and Zhejiang Museum of Natural History, between 2006 and 2013.

The research recently won a second-class award from the Ministry of Land and Resources.

Scientists identified eight new species among the fossils.

The survey covered an area of 11,000 square kilometers in Zhejiang,

Scientists have used various research techniques ranging from geology, paleobiology to chronostratigraphy, combined with site inspections and excavations in their study, making it the most comprehensive research on dinosaur fossils in the province to date.

"It has been proved that a large quantity of dinosaurs lived in Zhejiang

during the Cretaceous period, about 65 million to 145 million years ago," said Jin Xingsheng, deputy curator of Zhejiang Museum of Natural History. "Compare with other southeastern provinces, Zhejiang has the largest amount of dinosaur fossils."

Their discoveries also give evidence to the general thought that a comet or asteroid impact caused the mass extinction of dinosaurs.

Scientists found that sedimentary rocks, where most dinosaur fossils were unearthed, were sandwiched between two layers of volcanic rocks, indicating vegetation was lush and suitable for dinosaurs in the early and middle Cretaceous period.

The evidence showed a catastrophe in the late Cretaceous period might have ended the age of prehistoric creatures. Scientists believed the hit of an asteroid was the most likely reason as it can result in a series of sudden climate changes such as volcanic eruptions, crustal faults and generate radioactive substances that cause the dinosaurs to die out.