



Museum of Nature and Science

PRESS RELEASE

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PEROT MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE TEAM DISCOVERS NEW DINOSAUR SPECIES IN GRAPEVINE

Ampelognathus coheni roamed North Texas area 96 million years ago

Press kit including imagery [CLICK HERE](#).

DALLAS (November 1, 2023) - The Perot Museum of Nature and Science is celebrating the exciting discovery of a new dinosaur species found in North Texas. Perot Museum paleontologists Dr. Ron Tykoski and Dr. Dori Contreras, along with Dr. Christopher Noto of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, identified the new species *Ampelognathus coheni*, publishing their findings in the [Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology](#). The discovery of the small, plant-eating dinosaur is based on a partial lower jaw bone found near Grapevine Lake in Grapevine, Texas. The two-inch-long fossil from the lower left jaw is now curated in the collections of the Perot Museum.

"The identification of *Ampelognathus coheni* represents an important find for the Perot Museum and its research team, continuing our mission to inspire minds through nature and science," said Dr. Ron Tykoski, Vice President of Science and Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the Perot Museum. "The discovery helps us better understand the diversity of dinosaurs that once thrived in North Texas."

Ampelognathus coheni (pronounced AM-pell-oh-nay-thuss KOH-hen-ee) likely measured less than six-feet long and weighed no more than a medium-sized dog when it roamed the Dallas-Fort Worth area approximately 96 million years ago. At the time, a shallow seaway divided North America into eastern and western landmasses, with the eastern shoreline intersecting the North Texas region. The tropical climate of the prehistoric eastern shoreline was hot and humid. The landscape included beaches, lagoons, swamps, rivers, deltas, forests, and barrier islands.

"This needle-in-a-haystack find enhances what we know about prehistoric life in North Texas," said Dr. Dori Contreras, Curator of Paleobotany at the Perot Museum. "This discovery helps us reconstruct the ecosystem along the ancient shoreline that cut

across the region at the time. Stories of discovery like this help us inspire youth toward a lifelong love of science."

The name *Ampelognathus* means "Grapevine jaw", and the species name *coheni* honors Murray Cohen, the local fossil enthusiast and Perot Museum volunteer who found the specimen. The fossil was collected from the sandy rock exposures along Grapevine Lake in northern Tarrant County. *Ampelognathus* is the first known small-bodied, plant-eating ornithomimid dinosaur from the Lewisville Formation in Texas.

Ampelognathus is only the fourth dinosaur specimen named from the rocks of the Dallas-Fort Worth area, joining the armored dinosaur *Pawpawsaurus*, the large plant eater *Protohadros*, and the bird *Flexomornis*.

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About the Perot Museum of Nature and Science

Located in the heart of Dallas, Texas, the Perot Museum of Nature and Science is a nonprofit educational and research organization dedicated to inspiring minds through nature and science. Visitors will find everything from dinosaurs to diamonds and space to sports, packed into five levels of hand-on discovery and adventure. Through its state-of-the-art exhibits, educational programming and community outreach, the Museum offers exciting and innovative experiences for learners of all ages. For more information, visit perotmuseum.org.

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