

Major Points of the Paper

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Dahalokely tokana is a newly named species of meat-eating dinosaur, or theropod, from the island of Madagascar

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Dahalokely measured between 9 and 14 feet long, and lived approximately 90 million years ago

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Dahalokely is the first dinosaur to be named from Madagascar in nearly a decade

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The new dinosaur comes from a time when the southern, or Gondwanan, continents were breaking apart. The landmass composed of Madagascar plus India had just separated from Antarctica, isolating plants and animals from the other continents.

The New Name

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Pronunciation: dah-HAH-loo-KAY-lee too-KAH-nah

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The name, *Dahalokely tokana*, means “lonely little bandit”. This refers to the fact that it was a carnivorous dinosaur that lived at a time when Madagascar and India, together, were isolated from the rest of the world.

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The name comes from the Malagasy language, spoken on the island of Madagascar

The Fossil

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The only known specimen of *Dahalokely* includes parts of the backbone (vertebrae) and ribs.

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The specimen was discovered in 2007, on an expedition from Stony Brook University and University of Antananarivo. Additional bones from the animal were collected in 2010.

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The age of the fossil was determined by studying the rocks within which *Dahalokely* was found, and correlating small fossils (microfossils) with those found in rocks of known ages elsewhere.

Relationships

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Dahalokely belongs to a group called abelisauroids. These carnivorous dinosaurs were abundant on the southern continents during the second half of the Mesozoic.

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Detailed comparisons of the bones of *Dahalokely* allowed the research team to determine its identity as an abelisauroid, as well as confirm that the animal belonged to a previously

unknown species.

Importance

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Until now, no dinosaur fossils could be identified to the species level from the time period between 165 and 70 million years ago. *Dahalokely* shortens this gap by 20 million years.

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Dahalokely is also the only dinosaur known from the time period when India and Madagascar were joined together and isolated from the rest of the world. Thus, it potentially was ancestral to later dinosaurs on both land masses.

The Scientists

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Andrew A. Farke, project lead, is Augustyn Family Curator of Paleontology at the Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology, and an expert on Cretaceous dinosaurs.

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Joe Sertich, co-author, is curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, and an expert on Cretaceous dinosaurs and crocodylians.

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Quick Facts About Dahalokely

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