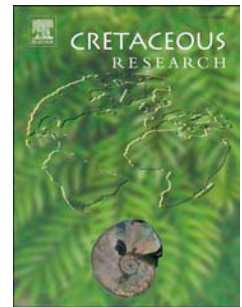


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Detection of Lower Cretaceous fossil impressions of a marine tetrapod on Monte Conero (Central Italy)

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ABSTRACT

Inside the Conero Natural Park, in Central Italy, on the top layers of the Maiolica Formation belonging to the Umbria-Marche succession, we discovered 11 depressions identified as a fossil trackway in an area forbidden to the public for safety reasons. We collected data about their dimensional and morphological characteristics, together with photographic documentation and cast collection, in an area difficult to reach. This data, with the characteristic alternation and the almost straight line of the depressions, together with the nature of the sediment on which they were imprinted, lead us to believe that we have found imprints constituting a trackway generated on a deep seabed. Furthermore, the results of our studies allow us to hypothesize that the series of tracks may have been impressed by the fore-paddles of a Lower Cretaceous marine tetrapod, a reptile not yet identified. According to current knowledge, the examined tracks seem to be unique for this period and rare for the deep seabed paleoenvironment.

KEYWORDS

Ichnofossils; Marine reptile; Tetrapod; Lower Cretaceous; Central Italy; Monte Conero.

1. INTRODUCTION

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