

FOSSILS OF 'DICKINSONIA' FOUND AT BHIMBETKA

Relevant for: null | Topic: Promotion and Preservation of Culture Incl. UNESCO

Traces of past: The fossils of 'Dickinsonia' found at the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters, near Bhopal.
| Photo Credit: [RAMESH SUSARLA](#)

Researchers have discovered three fossils of the earliest known living animal — the 550-million-year-old 'Dickinsonia' — on the roof of the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters, about 40 km from Bhopal.

One can identify the fossils from the white leaf-like patches with a central vertebra (central midrib) and connecting veins. While one fossil is 17 inches long, the other two are much smaller.

The new discoveries, published in a journal, *Gondwana Research*, can be seen right at the beginning of the 'Auditorium Cave', the first of such caves at Bhimbetka, a UNESCO heritage site, located about 3.5 metres above the ground.

Geological Survey of India's Bhopal in-charge Tapan Pal, who had come to visit the site, told *The Hindu* that they were the only such fossils available in the country, and were similar to those seen in south Australia.

"This is further proof of the similar paleoenvironments and confirms assembly of Gondwanaland by the 550 Ma (mega annum), but not reconstructions adjusted for true polar wander," the article says.

The five authors of the article are Gregory J. Retallack, Neffra A. Matthews, Sharad Master, Ranjit G. Khangar and Merajuddin Khan.

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