

Fossil Footprints
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In an article by Leonard Brand and James Florence, titled Stratigraphic Distribution of Vertebrate Fossil Footprints Compared with Body Fossils,¹ the authors do a fascinating study of fossil footprint sites, and correlate them with the distribution of actual fossils. Fossil footprints are not true fossils, and are more correctly identified by the term "trace fossil." True fossils are the actual remains of the animal.

In their comparison, they show that the quantity of bird and mammal fossils correlate with the number of trace fossils. In other words, where you see a large quantity of fossils in the rock record, you have a corresponding number of trace fossil footprints. However, when comparing reptile, amphibian, and dinosaur trace fossils, they do not correspond to the number of actual fossils in the rock record.

They equate this to the fact that during the first part of the flood (the Triassic sediments) the dinosaurs were more active, and during the later part of the flood (upper Jurassic and Cretaceous sediments) there were very few live amphibians or reptiles to produce footprints, except for the large dinosaurs. (This is contrasted with the young earth creationist book, Grand Canyon: Monument to Catastrophe, in which all the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous sediments are all "late flood")

Rebuttal

There are several problems with this theory. As any paleontologist knows, fossils are a hit and miss scenario. We consider ourselves lucky when we find a dinosaur fossil. However, we have found many mass dinosaur graves in the Jurassic and Cretaceous, which skews the data. Conditions were right for the mass burial of these bones by fluvial, river systems (not ocean systems, or global Flood related). We may yet discover unknown trackways, or great abundances of Triassic fossils which makes the correlation closer. We are lucky to have found the trackways that we have, and I'm certain there are many more we can't see because they are covered by other rock layers.

Second, and more importantly, if the Flood model is to be believed, ALL the dinosaurs had to be killed during the first 40 days of the flood. At day 40, when the rain stopped, the water was at its deepest. Why then do we have footprint trackways in multiple rock strata, on top of each other? By the time the second, higher layer was deposited, all the dinosaurs should have been dead...then who was making these tracks? It is evident from Stratigraphy, that you can't lay down all the rock layers in the world during the 370+ days of Noah's Flood.² In many instances, you have fossil trackways, in a lacustrine system, covered by other sediments, then another trackway in a later lacustrine system. This would require fluctuating sea levels during the flood, but during the flood, the waters rose for 40 days, then they receded for 330 days...no fluctuation.

Third, the authors propose the Triassic sediments were deposited during the early flood. Look at the leading Flood model proposed by the Institute for Creation Research, in their book *Grand Canyon: Monument to Catastrophe*. They claim the rocks of the Grand Canyon were deposited early in the Flood, and the rocks above this point, which show up north of the Canyon, were deposited during the receding of the floodwaters (Figure 4.1 of the book). These “receding” rock layers included the Triassic layers. Genesis 7:24 states the waters were at their maximum for 150 days. All the rocks which contain dinosaur fossils and footprints were deposited in this receding phase of the Flood, more than 150 days after the Flood started. Genesis 7:21-23 states that all living flesh died during the first 150-day prevailing period of the flood. How then are dinosaurs making footprints, during the receding phase of the flood! God SAID in Genesis 7:21-23 that they were dead! The fact that we even have footprints is conclusive proof that the Flood did not create all these rock layers.

Finally, the authors left out a key piece of information, that being the paleoenvironment. Were the environments of the time conducive to making footprints? You would have to consider this in order for their study to be conclusive.

Conclusion

The authors conclude *"that the footprint data make a very natural fit with a global flood model."* Actually, the global flood model fails to adequately explain the existence of trackways in late-flood sediments. I admit that this is dependent upon which “flood model” you believe in.

¹ <http://www.grisda.org/origins/09067.htm>

² www.answersincreation.org/stratigraphy.htm