



COPROLITES

Coprolites (*dung stones*) are fossilized feces. They are trace fossils. They provide evidence of an animal's behavior. These fossils help scientists study the eating habits of extinct animals. We have dung stones from animals as small as snails and as big as the largest dinosaurs.

A study of fossilized feces can tell us what animals lived in an area, even when no other fossil remains of that animal are found in the same location. Chemical study of coprolites can sometimes tell us the specific plants or animals that were eaten and then digested long ago. Coprolites help determine if a dinosaur was a plant-eater or an animal-eater. Parasites found in fossilized feces can shed light on diseases of the past and provide insights into an animal's migration patterns.

Coprolites are valuable research tools for scientists interested in a past for which there is no written record.