

First post-Mesozoic record of Crocodyliformes from Chile

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Fossil crocodylians are well known from vertebrate bearing localities in South America, but the last record of the group in Chile is from the Cretaceous. No living crocodylians occur in Chile today, and the timing of their disappearance from the country is unknown. We provide the first post-Mesozoic report of crocodylian remains from late Miocene marine deposits of the Bahía Inglesa Formation, northern Chile. The fragmentary material provides proof that Crocodyliformes were present in Chile until at least seven million years ago. We suggest that late Neogene climatic cooling and changes in South American palaeogeography caused the extinction of the group in Chile.

Key words: Crocodyliformes, climate change, extinction, Bahía Inglesa Formation, Neogene, Chile.

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