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THE DESERT ICHNOFAUNA FROM BOTUCATU FORMATION (UPPER JURASSIC – LOWER CRETACEOUS), BRAZIL

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The Botucatu Formation (Paraná Basin, Brasil) comprises one of the richest tetrapod ichnologic deposits of late Jurassic in South America. The ichnofossils are found in eolian sandstones, reddish colored in lithofacies considered to be dune and interdune deposits. The sandstones of Botucatu Formation originally covered a surface estimated in at least 1,300,000 km², constituting the largest known fossil desert in the world. His distribution area is surely one of the world's largest megatracksites. The tetrapod tracks from the Botucatu Formation comprise bipedal dinosauroids of relatively large and smaller types, both theropodian and ornithopodian; along with theromorphoid and mammaloid forms. The mammaloid forms are attributed to unknown early mammals; the theromorphoids forms, which were attributed to *Tritylodontoidea* when the Botucatu sandstones were though to be Lower Jurassic, are now attributed also to large early mammals. This ichnofauna seems to be completely endemic and, therefore, it was not sufficient studied. Invertebrate trace fossils also occur, produced by insects, arachnids and earthworms. Eighteen ichnosites have been discovered along the strip of nearly 2,500 km where the Botucatu Formation sandstones outcrops at the eastern side of the Paraná Basin, of which the most important is Ouro ichnosite; two sites, in Mato Grosso do Sul and Paraguay, along the western side. A complete and detailed study of this ichnofauna is in its initial phase.