

## Otozoum Activity #1 – The Mystery of the Otozoum Slab

Dinosaur State Park has many other awesome trace fossils besides the main trackway! In this post, investigate one of our favorite rock slabs that still has mysteries to unlock! This rock slab was discovered in Portland, Connecticut during the late 1800's and has been on display to the public for over 124 years at various museums in Connecticut!



The main feature of this rock are the 5 ancient animal tracks called Otozoum.

Even though this rock slab has been studied for more than 100 years. . . less than 5 years ago a geologist was visiting Dinosaur State Park, and while looking at the slab noticed some unusual features! Researchers are continuing to figure out exactly what they are! Can you? Lets get our science notebooks ready to investigate!

### Activity:

This activity can be done by yourself, with your siblings, or the rest of your family!

Visit the link below. This opens a 3D computer model of a portion of the slab. Practice zooming in and moving the slab around.

<https://skfb.ly/6R7Ct>

Now let's start:

1. Look at sections numbered 2 and 4. These are the Otozoum prints.
  - a. What do you notice about the prints?
  - b. What shape are they? How many toes?
  - c. Zoom in, what cool features do you see?
  - d. Use the internet to find out what the word "Otozoum" means. What other observations can you make about them?
2. Zoom into section 1. These are the mysterious tracks identified a few years ago. Make some observations about how they look:
  - a. How many do you see, what pattern are they in, anything else you notice about them.
  - b. Does this animal have a tail?
  - c. What evidence do you see that suggests it does. . . or does not?
  - d. Do these tracks look similar to ones you have seen in real life?
  - e. How can you investigate what sort of animal made these tracks?
  - f. Search the internet for small animals that live today and have similar tracks. What could observations of modern animals and their tracks reveal about the characteristics of the ancient animal who made these tracks?

You can continue the exploration by moving on to **Activity 2 – The Mystery of what scraped the Otozoum tracks**

The 3D models at the link above were created by Dr. James A. Hyatt (Environmental Earth Science Department, Eastern Connecticut State University) as part of ongoing collaborations with other colleagues. These models were built using numerous high-quality images captured from many angles which were then analyzed using digital photogrammetry software and other tools. All work was undertaken with permission from the Dinosaur State Park.

Please post questions to the comments section below or email [michael.p.ross@ct.gov](mailto:michael.p.ross@ct.gov).

