

‘Humble beginnings’: Newly discovered T. rex ancestor was quite small

A new dinosaur shows that even Tyrannosaurus rex had humble beginnings.

Dubbed Moros intrepidus, or “the harbinger of doom,” the new species is [one of the smallest tyrannosaurs yet discovered](#) from the Cretaceous Period. Analyses of the animal’s fossilized leg show that the creature would have stood only 1.2 meters at the hip, and weighed an estimated 78 kilograms — about the size of a mule deer.

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“What Moros shows is that the ancestral stock of the big tyrannosaurs was small and fast,” says Thomas Carr, a vertebrate paleontologist at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis., who wasn’t involved in the study. And it “suggests that the tyrannosaurs became giant some time in that 16-million-year stretch between Moros and the earliest of the big guys.”

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Even with the discovery of M. intrepidus, the picture of tyrannosaur evolution remains incomplete.

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[Now,] scientists need to find the rest of the skeleton of M. intrepidus as well as other tyrannosaurs in the narrow 16-million-year span between M. intrepidus and its giant descendants to help pinpoint when the creatures grew in size. “The story of tyrannosaurs is definitely not over,” [paleontologist Thomas Holtz Jr.] says.

Read full, original post: [A deer-sized T. rex ancestor shows how fast tyrannosaurs became giants](#)