

# First frogs discovered in Antarctica

The discovery of the earliest known modern amphibians provides evidence of a warm and temperate climate in the Antarctic Peninsula before its separation from the southern supercontinent, Gondwana



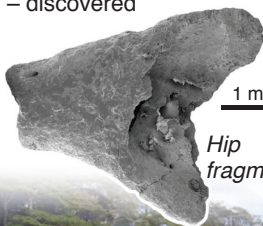
Antarctic Peninsula

ANTARCTICA

200km  
125 miles

8km  
5 miles

**Seymour Island:** 40m-year-old fossil fragments of skull and hip bone – belonging to family of helmeted frogs (*Calyptocephalellidae*) – discovered



1 mm

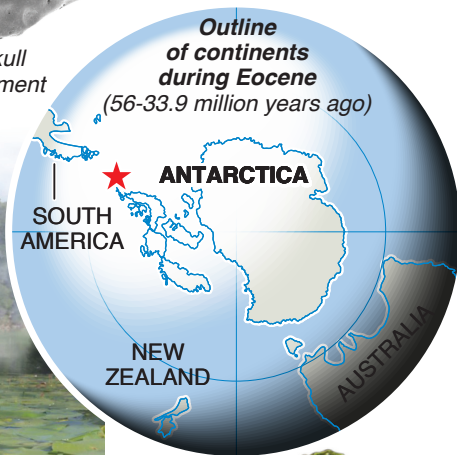
Skull fragment

Hip fragment

**GONDWANA**  
(Around 180 million years ago, not to scale)



Discovery contradicts previous evidence suggesting ice sheets formed across Antarctic Peninsula before break-up of Gondwana into continents of present-day southern hemisphere



**Outline of continents during Eocene**

(56-33.9 million years ago)

ANTARCTICA

SOUTH AMERICA

NEW ZEALAND

AUSTRALIA



▲ Reconstruction of Eocene pond in Antarctic Peninsula. Climate may have been comparable to humid and temperate forests of South America, where all five living species of helmeted frog are exclusively found

Artwork by Pollyanna von Knorring, Swedish Museum of Natural History.

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Sources: Nature  
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