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## **THE TETRAPODS FROM 'LA BUITRERA', CANDELEROS FORMATION (EARLY CENOMANIAN), RÍO NEGRO<sup>†</sup>**

Sebastián Apesteguía\*, Fernando E. Novas\*, Guillermo W. Rougier<sup>♣</sup>, Renato Andreis<sup>☆</sup>, Silvina de Valais<sup>☆</sup>, Pablo A. Gallina\*, Federico Agnolin\*, Jorge A. González\*, Fabián González\*, Analía M. Forasiepi\*, Agustín Scanferla\*, Andrea Cambiaso\*, Magalí Cárdenas<sup>☆</sup>, Ana P. Carignano\*, Leandro Gaetano\*, Alejandro Haluza\* and Daniela Medel\*

'La Buitrera' is a new locality of the Candeleros Formation (Early Cenomanian) outcropping on the NW foothill of the Rentería Mesa, Río Negro. It is providing a growing quantity of vertebrate remains. They are 3D and partially articulated, and include dipnoans, anurans, chelid turtles, eilenodontine sphenodontians, "madtsoid" snakes, araripesuchid crocodyliforms, carcharodontosaurid and coelurosaurian theropods, diplodocimorph and titanosauriform sauropods and mammals. The fossils are well preserved, with a light degree of disarticulation, and evidences of some aerial exposure and associated to paleosoils. Abundant remains of fishes were also collected. The most frequent association, "Sphenodontid-Araripesuchid-Snakes" (SAS), coming from the mid level, is found along 15 km, between "La Piedra Sola", "La Buitrera" and the "Quiroga-Montoya" area, where the contact between the Candeleros and Huincul Formations is evident. From the lower level, which comprise fine sediments, come freshwater turtles. The upper level has provided abundant but disarticulated remains of dinosaurs and dipnoan tooth plates (the oldest recorded in Argentina). The differences with the vertebrate fauna of "El Chocón", from the same formation, are due to the absence in the latter of some specially abundant taxa such as sphenodontians and snakes, perhaps related to taphonomical or environmental aspects, or to light time differences. On the other hand, the differences with other faunas such as that of the Bajo de la Carpa Formation (Santonian), seem to be related to a different faunal composition in relation to time spans rather than taphonomic aspects. This is supported because of the morphologically similar kind of preserved vertebrates, which include notosuchid crocodiles, basal alethinophidian snakes and small theropods.

\*Laboratorio de Anatomía Comparada y Sección de Paleontología de Vertebrados. Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales 'B. Rivadavia', Av. Angel Gallardo 470, (1405) Buenos Aires. paleoninja@yahoo.com.ar, fernovas@yahoo.com.ar, borhyaena@hotmail.com

<sup>♣</sup>Anatomical Sciences and Neurobiology, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY, 40292. grougier@louisville.edu

<sup>☆</sup>Departamento de Paleontología de Vertebrados, Museo Paleontológico Egidio Feruglio, Av. Fontana 140, (9100) Trelew, Chubut. muspal@satlink.com

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