

WorldViews

A truck driver inexplicably plowed over a 2,000-year-old site in Peru, damaging the designs

By [Eli Rosenberg](#) February 1

A truck driver in Peru damaged the 2,000-year-old Nazca Lines, after officials said he ignored warning signs and drove over a portion of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Nazca Lines are large designs that were scratched into the ground's surface between 500 B.C. and A.D. 500 on a coastal plain south of Lima. UNESCO calls the site one of the “greatest enigmas” of the archaeological world. They cover about 290 square miles and depict creatures, plants and imaginary beings, as well as geometric designs.

Peru's Ministry of Culture said that Jainer Jesus Flores Vigo, 40, was arrested for the errant drive on Jan. 27 in which three of the geoglyphs were damaged, although he was later released after a magistrate concluded that there was insufficient evidence to show that his actions were anything more than a mistake, [CNN reported](#). Local prosecutors have [appealed](#) the ruling.

Flores Vigo's drive left substantial tire marks across an area of about 150 by 350 feet on the site, according to Peruvian authorities.

According to [UNESCO](#), “the region's ancient inhabitants drew on the arid ground a great variety of thousands of large scale zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures and lines or sweeps with outstanding geometric precision, transforming the vast land into a highly symbolic, ritual and social cultural landscape that remains until today.” The designs are believed to have been important for astronomical rituals.

It's not the first time the site has been trampled on. In 2014, Peruvian officials said that Greenpeace activists left a line in the rainless desert that the government said would last "hundreds or thousands" of years during a stunt to place a message calling for renewable energy and their logo next to the geoglyph of a hummingbird.

Authorities plan to increase security around the site, CNN reported.

"While the Culture Ministry monitors areas with the largest concentration of geoglyphs every day, it may not be fully protected," Johnny Isla, a spokesman of the Ica branch of Peru's Ministry of Culture told Andina, a state-run news agency. "Entry and transit are possible through valleys and streams where the archaeological area spreads out."

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