

Great Expectations About Dinosaurs

Dinosaurs roamed the Earth during the Mesozoic era. A majority of people think that all dinosaurs are ferociously big reptiles. As noted since the year 1842, the term “dinosaur” signifies “terrible lizard”. For a fact, dinosaurs are not lizards but they shared a similar ancestor.

A majority of people think that all dinosaurs are ferociously big reptiles. Although this is generally true, there are many believed misconceptions, especially about their extinction.

As noted since the year 1842, the term “dinosaur” signifies “terrible lizard”. For a fact, dinosaurs are not lizards but they shared a similar ancestor. As a bulk or group, lizards are regarded as “primitive” types as compared to the dinosaurs. Although dinosaurs were considered as the largest amongst land animals, many of these “great dinosaurs” were no larger than a common turkey.

It is indicated that dinosaurs thrived the Earth during the Mesozoic era. This is also what they called as “The Age of Reptiles”, which lasted from approximately 245 million up to 65 million years ago. As time passed, it is believed that these dinosaur groups got bigger. Thus, things changed when the so-called “extinction event” took place 65 million years ago, wiping out all dinosaurs except for a few dinosaurs that were bird-like in features.

Amidst many disagreements amongst scientists, it was still noted that this extinction event may have started as a kind of asteroid impact, subsequently resulting to the erupting volcanoes’ choking of chemicals and extreme climatic changes among others.

This is one reason why only the classic big dinosaurs have become extinct. Experts still believe that birds are actually living dinosaurs. Others also believe that the Pterosaurs or the flying extinct reptiles were dinosaurs. As a matter of fact, they are merely the closest relatives of the dinosaurs. They are not dinosaurs, technically.

Paleontology has helped many understand dinosaurs and the way they roamed the Earth millions of years ago. Paleontology is the study of fossils. It will tell you the appearance of the organism and its evolutionary process. Thus, a fossil is regarded as any trace or remains like a bone, footprint or shell that was preserved inside a rock via gradually being changed into a rock itself. These traces or remains should belong to any type of plant or animal that walked through the Earth a long, long time ago.

From the previously recovered fossils, studies showed that some dinosaurs that were more advanced had feathers or actual body coverings that were feather-like. Even so, several of these advanced dinosaurs cannot fly or glide, for that matter. The purpose of their feathers is not for flight but for keeping warm, just like juveniles.

Furthermore, scientists have found a way to classify the dinosaurs. They divided them in two chief groups. They based it on the bone structure of the dinosaur’s hips.

One category would be the Saurischian Dinosaurs. It is pronounced as “sor-ISK-ee-en. A good example would be the Deinonychus, Maniraptors, the famous Tyrannosaurus Rex and some birds. These dinosaurs are “reptile-hipped” and their pelvis actually points forward, which is very similar to other primitive animals as well. Other features of the Saurischian Dinosaurs would be:

- Sharp and large teeth
- Long neck
- 1st finger that points away from the other fingers
- Long 2nd fingers

These Saurischian Dinosaurs are further subdivided into two major groups. This would be the:

1. Sauropods – These are 4-legged herbivores. Good examples would be the Brachiosaurus Diplodocus and the Apatosaurus among others. These were the largest amongst land animals but they had very small brains. They also had large guts which they use in order to digest grasses and leaves.
2. Theropods – These are 2-legged carnivores. Living birds are also associated as Theropods. Good examples would be the Allosaurus, Albertosaurus and the Velociraptor. They are considered as very agile. They possess large eyes making them very keen on spotting prey. They have “grasping claws” and sharp teeth meant for slicing their prey. The Theropods are also indicated as the extinct birds’ ancestors. This would include the Archaeopteryx or the “first bird” ever documented. Other living birds that had evolved from different branches of the family tree of dinosaurs are also included in this sect. When it comes to their behavior, science has come a long way in knowing about the wonders of the dinosaur era. Scientists have

noted that Theropod Dinosaurs have a similar behavior to actual living birds. This would include tucking their heads beneath their forelimbs when they sleep and nesting in order to have their eggs protected.

The other category is the Ornithischian Dinosaurs. It is pronounced as or-neh-THISK-ee-en. This group has horns and frills. Examples would include the Iguanodontids, Ceratopsians, Duck-billed Hadrosaurs and Armored Stegosaurs among others. Among these the Duck-billed Hadrosaurs are the mild mannered and plant eaters of the group. The dinosaurs in this group has a pelvis that is pointing backward or "bird hips". This is amidst the fact that birds are not their ancestors. Thus, their bird hips is a bit stable and provides a more lumbering appearance. They also possess a bump in front of the lower portion of their jaw. This is actually "beak-like". Plus, their teeth are blunter and smaller as compared to the Saurischian Dinosaurs.

Some of the common and popular dinosaurs are as follows:

1. Ceratosaurus

Fossils found in: Fremont County, Colorado, USA from 1883 up to 1884

Estimated Height: 2 meters or 6 feet and 6 inches

Estimated Length: 6 meters or 20 feet

Estimated Weight: 1 tonne

The Ceratosaurus or the so-called "horned reptile" was a carnivorous dinosaur that had a bony hump right on its snout. Many scientists believe that this hump was not used as a form of protection but as their means of fighting with other males for mates. The weaponry it uses for protection would be its bone-crashing jaws and giant fangs. It is also believed that they were very good swimmers.

2. Deinonychus

Fossils found in: North America

Estimated Weight: 250 pounds or 80 kilograms

Estimated Length: 3 up to 3.3 meters or 10 up to 11 feet

The Deinonychus or the so-called "terrible claw" had claws and a toe that is sickle-shaped on each of its foot. It is a known carnivore that hunts in packs. It also uses its tail in order to keep its balance while doing a leaping attack. In order to slash its victim, it will use its swiveling claws situated in its 2nd toe.

3. Dilophosaurus

Fossils found in: Arizona, USA in the year 1942

Estimated Weight: 1,500 pounds or 681.8 kilograms

Estimated length: 6 meters or 20 feet

The Dilophosaurus or the so-called "two-ridged reptile" had two bony thin crests which looks a lot like 2 half dinner plates that runs from the top portion of its nose towards the back part of its huge head. Since it has slender and weak jaws, it does not have the ability to prey on other reptiles. It is more likely to be a scavenger. Thus, its feet had 3 clawed toes and a bi toe that is turned backward.

4. Diplodocus

Fossils found in: Canyon City, Colorado, USA in the year 1877

Estimated Weight: 10 up to 11 tonnes

Estimated Length: 27 meters or 88 feet and 6 inches

The Diplodocus or the so-called "double beam" has small bones underneath its backbone. These beams would have a piece running forward and a piece running backward, thus the reason why it is regarded as having double beams. The Diplodocus has 15-neck vertebrae. Its feet were similar to that of an elephant's, having 5 short toes. Thus, it is the longest known dinosaur that ever walked the Earth. In fact, its size was its main form of defense. Its long tail is also a defense mechanism to whip its attackers. Many scientists believed that the Diplodocus eats leaves that weigh more than 1 metric tonnes.

5. Plesiosaurus

Fossils found in: England by a certain Mary Anning in the year 1821

Estimated Length: 2.5 up to 14 meters or 8.20 up to 45.93 feet

The Plesiosaurus is actually not an indicated dinosaur. It is more of a huge swimming reptile. Its name signifies "nearer to the reptiles". This is due to the fact that it is in-between a type of fish and a reptile. In fact, it is similar to a "modern-day" sea lion. Scientists believe that it was a "bottom-feeder" which completely swims underwater through the use of its large limbs that were formed like paddles. It also uses its long neck to dart towards the clams, snails and fishes. Thus, since it still needs air to be able to breathe, it will generally come up to the surface of the water once in a while.

6. Pteranodon

Fossils found in: Smoky Hill River, Kansas, USA from the year 1870 up to the year 1871.

Estimated Wing Span: 7 meters or 23 feet

Estimated Weight: 36.6 pounds or 16.6 kilograms

The Pteranodon or the "toothless flyer" was considered as a flying reptile. It is believed that it has the ability of "sustained soaring and flying" because it can range as far as the open sea in order to catch some fish. Since it has a toothless bill, it also has a pouch where it can have the fishes it catches stored. Its head had a bony crest that acts as a counterbalance for its very large beak. It is also believed that it thrives a lot like the Albatross these days.

7. Triceratops

Fossils found in: Niobrara County Wyoming, USA from the year 1889 up to the year 1892

Estimated Weight: 5 up to 6 tonnes

Estimated Length: 9 meters or 29 feet and 6 inches

The Triceratops or the so-called "3-horned face" is also considered as the most popular horned dinosaur. It has a weight equivalent to 2 elephants. The bony and broad frills situated at the back portion of its head are indicated to help it cool down and warm up. It's powerful built and "long facial horns" make it a dreadful opponent to even the biggest carnosaur. Males would lock their horns when they fight.

8. Tyrannosaurus Rex

Fossils found in: Dawson County, Northern Montana, USA in the year 1902

Estimated Height: 5.6 meters or 18 feet and 6 inches

Estimated Length: 14 meters or 64 feet

Estimated Weight: 7 tonnes

The Tyrannosaurus Rex is the most controversial and popular dinosaur that ever lived. Its name signifies "tyrant reptile". It is considered as the most powerful flesh-eating dinosaur that roamed the Earth. It has massive jaws and its teeth are about 18 centimeters in length. It actually rushes to its prey with its jaws opened wide. It will use its huge clawed feet to pin its prey down while it tears off chunks of its flesh using its mouth. This is the most dreaded dinosaur according to belief.

About the Author

For more information on [Dinosaur Facts](#) please visit our website.

Source: www.isnare.com

Source: <http://articles.exospy.com>