ROYAL BC MUSEUM
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BACKGROUNDER

Notable British Columbia Dinosaur Age Fossils

Flying Reptiles

A toothy jaw discovered by artist Sharon Hubbard on Hornby Island turns out to be BC's first flying reptile. This fossil represents a pterosaur (flying reptile) from the Age of Dinosaurs and the first pterosaur cranial (head) material in Canada. At 70 million years old, it is about 40 million years younger than the closest known relatives in China. With a wingspan perhaps reaching three metres, it soared on thermals above the rich warm waters and lush forest and wetlands of BC's Cretaceous coast line. This fossil is in the collections of the Royal BC Museum.

Dino by the Tail

A palm-sized bone discovered by high school teacher Timon Bullard may represent BC's first coastal dinosaur. Picked up from the shore line, the fossil appears to be from an Ornithomimid or ostrich dinosaur. These were modest-sized, two -egged omnivorous or herbivorous dinosaurs of the northern hemisphere. The fossil is about 75 million years old and reveals for the first time that dinosaurs lived on BC's coast during the Cretaceous Period. More fossil bone and further study are needed before the animal can be described in the scientific literature. This fossil is in the collections of the Royal BC Museum.

Steps in Time

Three-toed tracks of a dinosaur, *Anomoepus*, were found near Fernie, BC. They are about 100-150 million years old (Late Jurassic to Early Cretaceous Periods) and may be from ornithischian (bird-hipped) dinosaurs. These animals were herbivores, sometimes lived in herds, and may have been eaten by large theropods. One foot print in the Royal BC Museum collection has a skin impression. Many dinosaur trackways and bones have been revealed in the last decade around Tumbler Ridge, BC by local residents and researchers from the Peace River Palaeontological Research Centre. Duckbilled dinosaurs, ankylosaurs and carnivorous Albertosaurus roamed the shorelines and forests of northeast BC 75 million years ago.

From the Wilds of Northern BC

Recently (2008) studied fossils from our wild northern mountains prove that dinosaurs roamed the interior of BC 70-80 million years ago. The leg bones belonged to some sort of pachycephalosaur or ornithomimid dinosaur. Bone-headed or helmet-headed pachycephalosaurs had thick-skulls and ate plants. Ornithomimids, also known as bird-mimic dinosaurs, resembled ostriches and were likely omnivorous. We need to revisit the isolated discovery site and find more bones before we can identify exactly what kind of dinosaurs these were. These fossils are in the collections of the Royal BC Museum.

Ocean Flocks

Bird fossils from Hornby Island reveal that flocks of marine birds floated on or flew over coastal seawaters of ancient British Columbia. Bones of primitive ancestors of "modern birds" were expected to be found in these 70-75 million year old deposits. The bones of the long extinct "opposite birds" (named so because of the opposite structure of their wing joint compared to modern birds); however, were the first ones of this age ever discovered in the Pacific Ocean region. Opposite birds went extinct with the dinosaurs and ammonites at the end of the Age of Dinosaurs 65 million years ago. It appears that birds played an important role in BC's very ancient marine ecosystems. These fossils are in the collections of the Royal BC Museum.