



DINOSAURS IN THEIR TIMESM

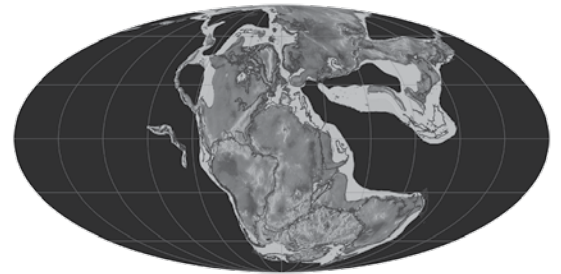
Carnegie Museum of Natural History

Dinosaurs flourished for 181 million years during the Mesozoic Era, which is divided into three distinct periods: the Triassic (251–206 million years ago), the Jurassic (206–145 million years ago), and the Cretaceous (145–66 million years ago). The chronologically-distinct exhibits of Dinosaurs in Their Time realistically recreate seven environments spanning the Age of Reptiles, juxtaposing dinosaurs with the creatures who shared their environments, including amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds, and mammals.

Triassic Period

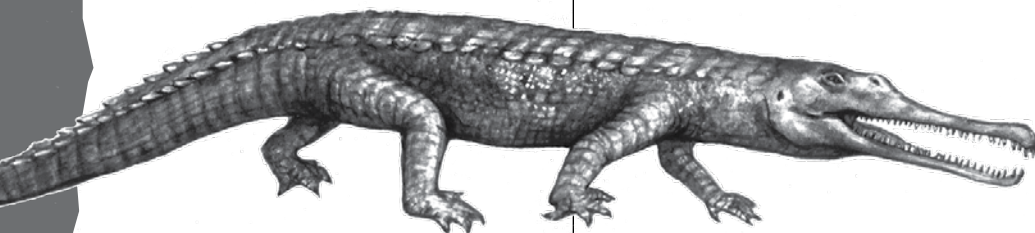
(251–206 million years ago)

The name “Triassic” comes from the Trias, a three-part division of rock types in Germany that represents this period of geologic time.



As the period began, the Earth’s continents were united in a single landmass. There were no icecaps. Most of the life forms that had dominated the planet were gone, killed off by a massive extinction event. The Earth took its first steps toward the creation of modern ecosystems.

The planet’s cast of characters changed radically in the Triassic. Ecosystems became more complex and diverse, both on land and in the seas. In addition to dinosaurs, many other remarkable lifeforms made their debuts on the Earth during the Triassic. Animals that emerged in the early Triassic included groups that would evolve into crocodiles, alligators, lizards, and snakes. The middle of the Triassic brought along unusual four-legged creatures, such as rhynchosaur, phytosaurs, and metoposaurs that would disappear before the curtain fell on the Triassic. Also appearing toward the end of the Triassic were mammals, turtles, crocodiles, salamanders, frogs, pterosaurs, and the next big thing—dinosaurs.



Phytosaurs, like *Rutiodon* (left), were large, predatory, semiaquatic reptiles that resembled modern crocodiles.

Dinosaurs:

Herrerasaurus
Coelophysis

Archosaurs:

Postosuchus

Phytosaurs:

(Crocodile-like reptiles)

Redondasaurus
Rutiodon

Amphibians:

Koskinonodon

Mammals:

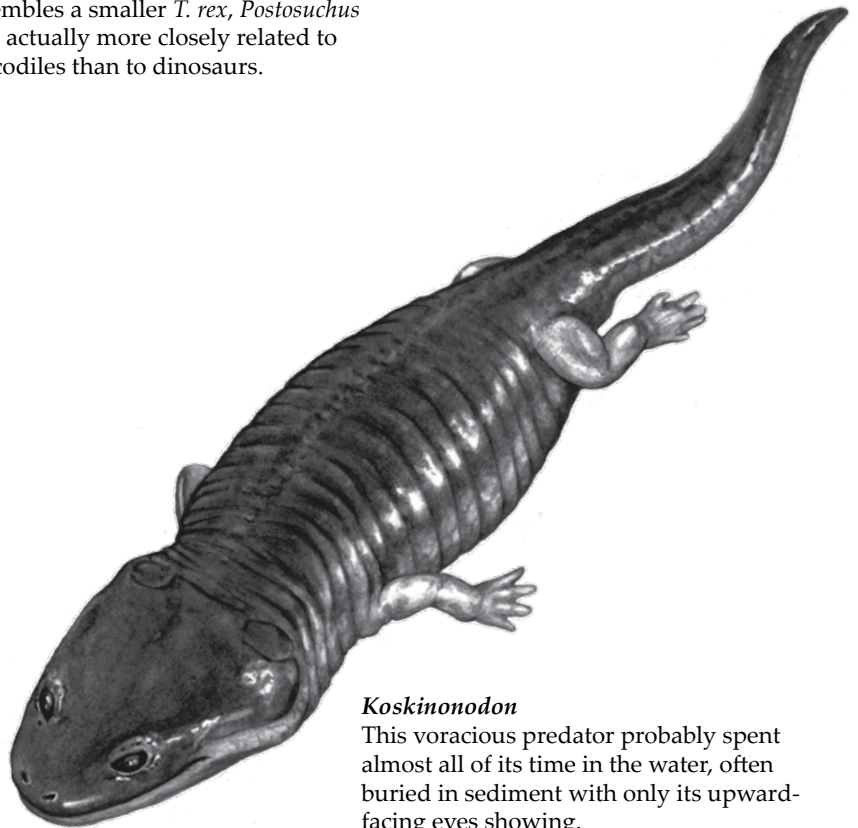
Sinoconodon
Morganucodon
Hadrocodium

Triassic Seaway:

Lariosaurus
Ceratites
Spiriferina
Encrinus
Pemphix
Monophyllites

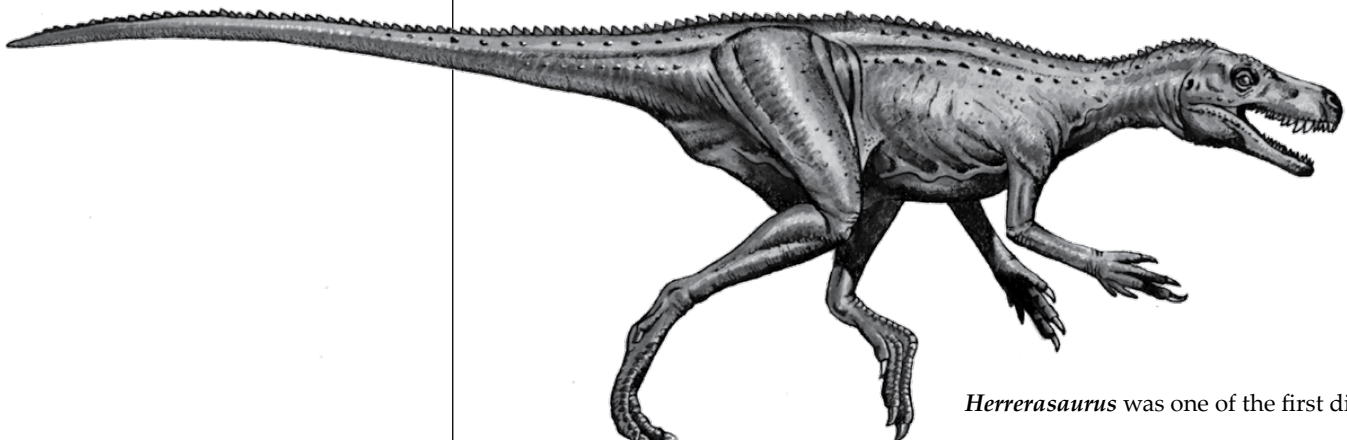


Postosuchus was among the most fearsome land-living carnivores of the Late Triassic world. Although it resembles a smaller *T. rex*, *Postosuchus* was actually more closely related to crocodiles than to dinosaurs.



Koskinonodon

This voracious predator probably spent almost all of its time in the water, often buried in sediment with only its upward-facing eyes showing.



Herrerasaurus was one of the first dinosaurs.