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Science World News

# Dino Dig

**When were dinosaurs alive?**

- **Dinosaurs first evolved during the Triassic period (252 to 201 million years ago).**
- **What followed is called the Jurassic period (201 to 145 million years ago).**

Illustration: An Elaphrosaur.

# Volunteer Digs up Dinosaur

**Sometimes, a team of scientists work together to make a huge discovery. Sometimes, instead, a chance discovery of a tiny clue is all it takes.**

Five years ago during an annual dig at a site called Eric the Red West, near Cape Otway in Australia, a volunteer digger called Jessica Parker found a small delicate fossil.

At first, it was thought to be from a Pterosaur. However, after looking more closely, they realised it was from something else.

It was a rare dinosaur called an Elaphrosaur, "A meat-eating dinosaur, related to Tyrannosaurus rex, Velociraptor, and modern birds," said palaeontologist Dr Poropat.

He went on to say, "as dinosaurs go, they were rather bizarre" because "this 'meat-eating dinosaur' probably didn't eat meat!"

As strange as this sounds it's because the few Elaphrosaur fossils that exist seem to show that as youngsters they had teeth, but as adults they had a toothless beak!

The site of the discovery shows that the dinosaurs must have been able to withstand the cold.

The fossil was found in rocks dating from the Cretaceous period, which came after the Jurassic. At that time, Australia was still part of the Antarctic continent.

100 million years ago the Antarctic probably had a swampy landscape and forests like those found in New Zealand today.

Nevertheless, Elaphrosauruses would still have had to survive the dark winter months when temperatures dropped below freezing.

## Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pterosaur** | A prehistoric flying reptile. |
| **palaeontologist** | A scientist who studies dinosaurs. |
| **withstand** | To remain undamaged by. |
| **continent** | Any of the world's mainland masses, e.g. Europe, Asia, Africa. |

# Questions

1. Who discovered the bone?

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2. Using information in the article, locate one example of how Antarctica has changed over the last 100 million years.

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3. In the paragraph beginning "He went on to say..." which word used which means very strange or unusual?

_____

4. From which type of dinosaur did the researchers initially think the bone came from? Tick one.

- ○ Pterosaur
- ○ Dinosaur
- ○ Plesiosaur

5. According to the article, which dinosaurs is the Elaphrosaur related to? Tick all which apply.

- ○ Stegosaurus
- ○ Tyrannosaurus rex
- ○ Velociraptor

6. Summarise the key information in this article using 20 words or fewer.

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# Answers

1. Who discovered the bone?
   **a volunteer called Jessica Parker**

2. Using information in the article, locate one example of how Antarctica has changed over the last 100 million years.
   **Accept an answer which references that Antarctica was a swampy landscape with forests but is now an ice-covered land or that Australia used to be a part of the Antarctic continent.**

3. In the paragraph beginning "He went on to say..." which word used which means very strange or unusual?
   **Bizzare**

4. From which type of dinosaur did the researchers initially think the bone came from? Tick one.

   - ✓ **Pterosaur**
   - ○ Dinosaur
   - ○ Plesiosaur

5. According to the article, which dinosaurs is the Elaphrosaur related to? Tick all which apply.

   - ○ Stegosaurus
   - ✓ **Tyrannosaurus rex**
   - ✓ **Velociraptor**

6. Summarise the key information in this article using 20 words or fewer.
   **Accept a reasonable answer which includes the story's key information in 20 words or fewer, e.g. A volunteer discovered a rare dinosaur in Australia. The part of Australia used to be part of Antarctica.**