

A new era of dinosaurs

October 2 2017, by Kim Cousins, Particle

Q: What looks like a duck but can't fly? A: Therizinosaurus, one of the dinosaurs you'll meet at Dinosaur Discovery: Lost creatures of the Cretaceous.

Therizinosaurus is joined by 22 other dinosaurs in this digitally augmented exhibition.

Mikael Siversson is Curator of Palaeontology at the [WA Museum](#). He's responsible for choosing the different dinosaurs on display.

"I wanted to include dinosaurs from many parts of the world," Mikael says.

"The Cretaceous era was selected as it offers the greatest diversity of shapes."

You've heard of the Jurassic era? Well the Cretaceous era came after that and was around 145 to 66 million years ago.

Aussie Aussie Aussie!

Australia is strongly represented with a bunch of Aussie-discovered dinosaurs in the line-up. Plant eaters like the relatively gentle *Leaellynasaura* are joined by the disturbingly gruesome [Australovenator](#), a meat eater with huge claws.

"These claws were made for killing, along with its jaws," Mikael says.

There are some they never taught you about at school—*Muttaborrasaurus*, an 8-metre long plant eater, and *Kunbarrasaurus*, a small armour-wearing dinosaur.

Carcharodontosaurus is Mikael's favourite. At 11 metres long, this impressive creature has shark-like teeth.

"It's a *T. rex*-like dinosaur," Mikael says. "Everyone knows about *T. rex*. I wanted to show people there are other meat eaters.

"The *Carcharodontosaurus* is equally as terrifying."

Speaking of terrifying, did I mention most of the dinosaurs in the exhibition are animatronic? This means they move. They even breathe.

Mongolia and dinosaur dung

The exhibition also has plenty of Mongolian [dinosaurs](#).

"Mongolia has desert outcrops and exposed cliffs, with not a lot of soil coverage," Mikael says. "This means dinosaur fossils from Mongolia are particularly well preserved, thanks to the environment."

It's not just old bones that have been unearthed (in Mongolia and other parts of the world). Fossilised dinosaur dung also helps palaeontologists with their research.

You don't have to be a scientist to work out that an 8kg piece of dung came from a pretty big creature. Scientists have, however, analysed stuff like this to work out dinosaur diet.

"It was found to be full of bone chips," Mikael says. "It was linked to *T. rex*, as he was thought to be a bone cruncher.

"Bite marks have also been found on bones. From this we know that *T. rex* sometimes ripped the head off the *Triceratops* to get to the neck muscles."

The award for the strangest dinosaur on display goes to *Therizinosaurus*.

"*Therizinosaurus*'s ancestors were meat eaters but gradually changed to feeding on plants," Mikael says.

"*Therizinosaurus* looked a bit like a duck with small teeth, a huge gut and enormous claws for defence."

Dinosaur Discovery: Lost Creatures of the Cretaceous is at Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre and runs until 28 January. Visit the [WA Museum website](#) for ticket prices and more info.

This article first appeared on [Particle](#), a science news website based at Scitech, Perth, Australia. Read the [original article](#).

Provided by Particle

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