

# EXPEDITION ALASKA: DINOSAURS

## Exhibit & Film Fact Sheet

### AGE OF DINOSAURS

MESOZOIC ERA

million years ago

252

66

## ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

*Expedition Alaska: Dinosaurs* features authentic Alaska dinosaur fossils, including specimens from the museum's collection that have been the subject of recent research.

The museum has the state's only dinosaur lab, where thousands of fossils, footprints, and other evidence of ancient life in Alaska are cleaned, examined, and stored for future study. The museum's earth sciences team must journey to great lengths to retrieve these specimens.

The University of Alaska Museum of the North has been researching Alaska dinosaurs since they were first recognized in the state. The museum houses the largest collection of polar dinosaurs anywhere on the planet.



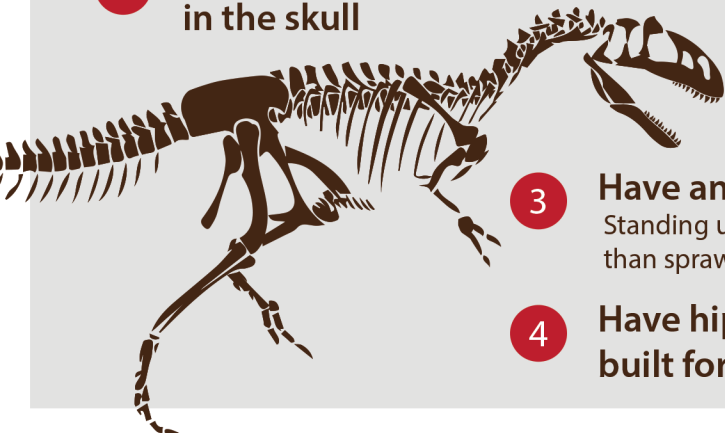
### DINO SITES — ALASKA —

Yukon River  
Alaska Peninsula  
Talkeetna Mountains  
Southeast Alaska  
Denali National Park  
Colville River



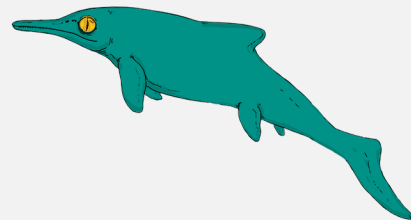
## TO BE A DINO, AN ANIMAL MUST...

- 1 Be a reptile  
Not a mammal
- 2 Have special openings  
in the skull



- 3 Have an erect stance  
Standing upright rather  
than sprawling
- 4 Have hips and legs  
built for running

## THE UN-DINOSAURS



## 3 MAJOR GROUPS OF ANCIENT MARINE REPTILES HAVE BEEN FOUND IN ALASKA

Ichthyosaur | Plesiosaur | Thalattosaur

Each group of marine reptiles had a different land-living ancestor.

Front and hind limbs, which we call paddles, are actually modified, weight-bearing legs.

Each group had external nose openings -- like humans and whales -- and came to the surface regularly to breathe air.

### For More Information

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# EXPEDITION ALASKA: DINOSAURS

## Exhibit & Film Fact Sheet

This exhibit and film were planned, designed,  
and created by the museum's team.

### What else lived in ANCIENT ALASKA?

#### *Flying Reptiles (Pterosaurs)*



Close relatives of dinosaurs, but they had a highly modified fourth finger used as a wing. Pterosaurs are only one of three vertebrate groups that ever evolved powered flight, the others being birds and bats.

#### *Early Mammals*



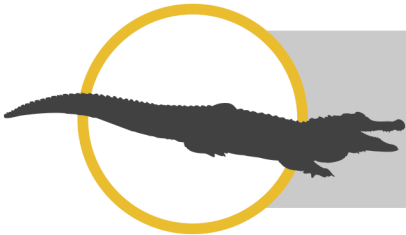
Early mammals appear in the fossil record at about the same time as the first dinosaurs. But like us, all mammals have fur (hair), and nurse their young. Common early mammals were similar in appearance to shrews.

#### *Ice Age Animals*



Ice Age animals, such as mammoths, mastodons, and scimitar-toothed tigers, were mammals that lived in Alaska during the last Ice Age (1.5 million to 12,000 years ago) – not during the Mesozoic.

#### *Crocodylians*



Crocodylians, crocodiles, alligators, and caimans are the closest living relatives of dinosaurs. They have a sprawling posture but lack the specializations in their legs seen in dinosaurs. Crocodylians first appeared in the fossil record during the Triassic Period, **but they haven't been found in Alaska as far as we know!**



### WHAT ABOUT BIRDS?



Birds and dinosaurs share many important features: They possess the same skull openings, erect posture and leg specializations seen in dinosaurs.

We now understand that **birds ARE dinosaurs.**