

Feathered Friends?

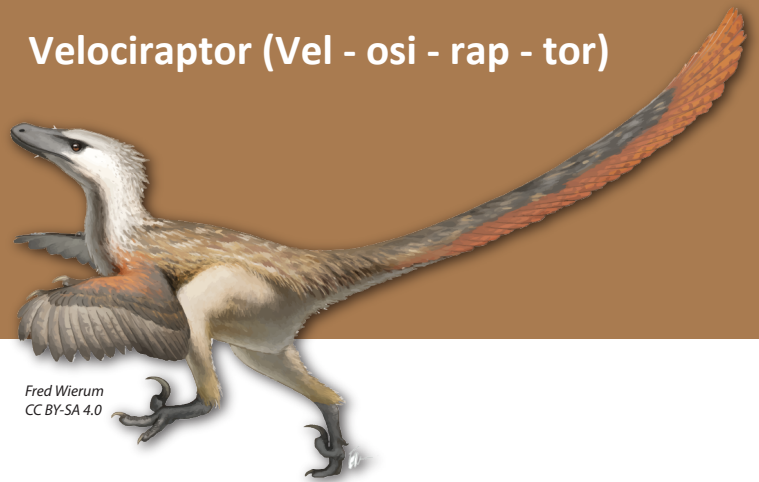
Paleontologists are scientists who study fossils to find out about things which used to be alive a long time ago. Fossils are rocks that have imprints of things which used to be alive. Paleontologists have found clues in fossils that show dinosaurs had feathers.

This is a different idea to the pictures you usually see in books. It is also different to films. In films dinosaurs usually have scaly skin. Have you seen dinosaurs in books or on TV? What did the dinosaurs look like? Did the dinosaurs have feathers?

This picture shows what a Velociraptor may have really looked like.

A Velociraptor was a small dinosaur which had long claws. Velociraptors could run very fast.

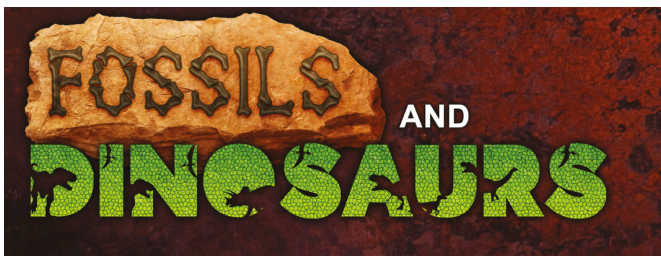
Velociraptor (Vel - osi - rap - tor)



Fred Wierum
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Tyrannosaurus rex is a very famous kind of dinosaur. It is sometimes called T-rex for short. T-rex has its own section. You can find out more about T-rex in its section. Was the Tyrannosaurus rex covered in feathers? T-rex might have had feathers when it was young but lost them as it got older.



Feathered Friends?

Where is the evidence?

How do we know dinosaurs had feathers?

Have you ever held a feather? Feathers are very delicate. Because feathers are so delicate, there are not many fossils of feathers. Paleontologists look at fossils for clues. The clues help us find out more about dinosaurs. Some of these clues show us that dinosaurs probably had some feathers.

Does this mean that dinosaurs could fly?

No. Scientists don't know why dinosaurs grew feathers. Maybe dinosaurs grew feathers to keep warm.

Archaeopteryx

There was a kind of dinosaur called Archaeopteryx (Ark-A-op-ter-ix). They lived a long time ago. Archaeopteryx had wings. Archaeopteryx was one of the first animals with feathers and wings. It was able to use its wings to fly. It might be that all the birds we see today came from Archaeopteryx

This is a fossil of an archaeopteryx feather. There are not many fossils of feathers. That makes this a very special fossil.

