



Life of the Jurassic



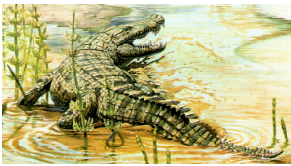
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Icthyosaurs



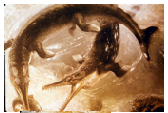
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In the Jurassic two groups of crocodylians emerged. One group, represented by the form illustrated below, looked very much like modern alligators and crocodiles - they lived in semiaquatic environments much like that of modern forms.



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The other group went back to living in the open ocean and began to develop fins and flippers. This group of marine crocodylians did not survive into the Cretaceous.



Note:
Long snouts
Reduced limbs
Flippers and fins

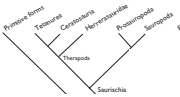


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Archaeopteryx



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Sauropods were the world's largest terrestrial animals. They had their maximum diversity during the Jurassic, though they lasted on until the end of the Cretaceous.

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The oldest Sauropods were the Cetiosaurs (and related forms), limited to early and middle Jurassic

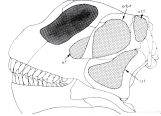


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By mid Jurassic Cetiosaurs had given rise to the two major groups of sauropods...

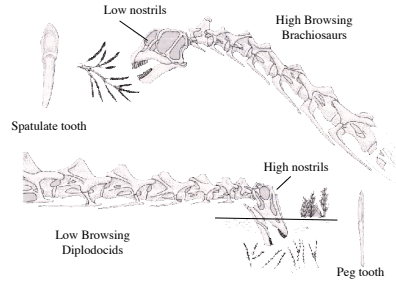
Diplodocids

Brachiosaurs



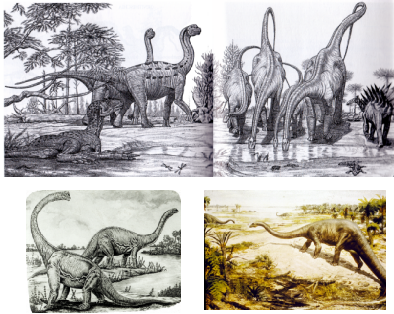
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Major Sauropod types by feeding behavior



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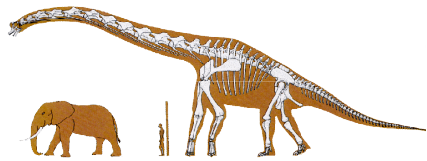
What was the proper posture of Sauropods?



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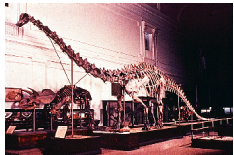
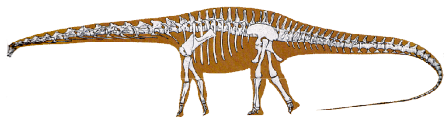
Size comparison of a Brachiosaur and a few mammals.

*Note correct posture for a Brachiosaur.



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Correct posture for a Diplodocid.



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Trackways

Sauropod trackways are among the most common dinosaur footprints in the world. In Texas alone there are over 40 known sauropod trackways (though they are early Cretaceous in age)!

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Trackways

Site Map

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Eggs and Skin

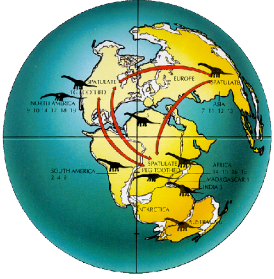
Many sauropod nesting sites are known and they laid fairly large eggs (see egg compared to cantaloupe). Sites have many nests, though it is not known if many females laid eggs at the same time or spread it out over time but used the same nesting ground.

The few impressions of sauropod skin we have indicate a rough pebbly skin with small to large bony structures (scutes) in the skin.

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Distribution of Jurassic Sauropods



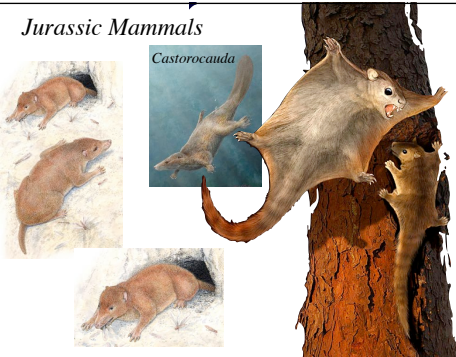
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● Early Jurassic mammals were still rather small, but by the Middle to Late Jurassic there were already specialized forms

- Gliders
- Burrowers
- Paddle-tailed, web-footed fish eaters

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Jurassic Mammals



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Mammals

- In addition to the Allotheria that appeared in the Triassic, two new groups appear.
- Prototheria (monotremes and their extinct relatives)
- Eutriconodonta - extinct at end of Cretaceous

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Prototheria



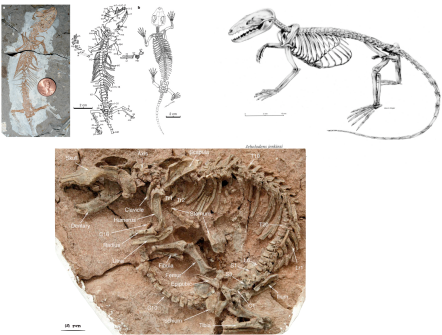
- Stumpy legs and tails
- Middle Jurassic onward - oldest platypus Cretaceous
- Never numerous - moderately common in Gondwana
- Egg-laying reproduction - primitive posture
- Insectivores?

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Eutriconodonta

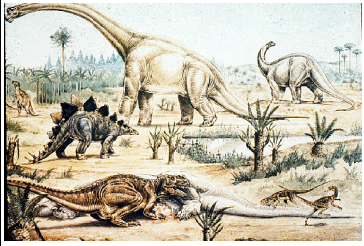
- Relatively common during the Jurassic and Cretaceous in Laurasia and northern Africa
- Omnivores and carnivores, one specimen has a baby dinosaur in the gut
- Extinct at end of Cretaceous
- Mode of reproduction unknown

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Jurassic Fauna and Flora



Cycadeoid

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