Mesozoic reptiles

This exhibition shows the diversity of reptiles during the Mesozoic era, 250 to 65 million years ago. Focus is mainly on the dinosaur fauna from the Upper Cretaceous of Canada. Among these are the well-known horned dinosaurs (ceratopsians) like Anchiceratops, Centrosaurus and Pachyrhinosaurus. Other remains of plant-eating dinosaurs belong to the duck-bills (hadrosaurs) like Corythosaurus, as well as armoured dinosaurs (ankylosaurs) like Euplocephalus, which reached a length of six metres. If you wonder why a large dinosaur like Euplocephalus needed armour to protect itself, you should take a look at the skull of Albertosaurus, the largest meat-eating Canadian dinosaur. Albertosaurus is a close relative of Tyrannosaurus rex and belongs to the same family. Even though the nine-metre-long Albertosaurus was somewhat smaller than Tyrannosaurus rex, it was still a formidable predator.

Apart from dinosaurs from the Upper Cretaceous of Canada, remains of European dinosaurs such as the famous Iguanodon are on display. Iguanodon was one of the first dinosaurs to be named, in 1825 by the Englishman Gideon Mantell. Also on display is the foot of one of the oldest known dinosaurs from Europe, Plateosaurus, which is 215 million years old. A complete skeleton of Plateosaurus has recently been discovered in Upper Triassic deposits in East Greenland. Plateosaurus is a representative of the forerunners of the large sauropod dinosaurs; the long-necked dinosaurs.

Other reptiles from the Mesozoic era are on display. This includes a flipper from the short-necked plesiosaur Pliosaurus macromerus, which grew to a length of 12 metres. Other marine reptiles, which lived alongside the dinosaurs, include the long-necked plesiosaur Plesiosaurus, the dolphin-like ichthyosaur Stenopterygius and the marine crocodile Teleosaurus. All the above-mentioned marine reptiles derive from the Jurassic Age. Finally you should take a look at the ceiling, from which a reconstruction of the Late Cretaceous pterosaur Pteranodon is suspended. None of these marine or flying reptiles were dinosaurs, but belong to other groups. However, the pterosaurs are considered closely related to the dinosaur/bird-group.