



Dinosaurs - Were there dinosaurs in New Zealand?

Fact

- Yes, there were dinosaurs in New Zealand. But there weren't very many and they were mostly marine animals (animals that lived in or near the sea) because during the dinosaur period New Zealand spent a lot of time under the sea.
- Rikisaurus was a prehistoric reptile that lived in the water around New Zealand.
- Fossils have been found in New Zealand of Plesiosaurs which are another type of dinosaur that lived in the water.
- New Zealand also had a dinosaur that was a cousin of the meat-eating Allosaurus

Do you know

- Millions of years ago New Zealand was joined to a huge land mass called Gondwanaland.
- The land broke into chunks and moved on the continental plates to where they are now. New Zealand broke away from Gondwanaland 80 million years ago.
- During the shift New Zealand spent a lot of time under the water – this was when most of the dinosaurs were around so we missed out on a lot of activity.
- Fossils are the preserved remains of things like animals and plants.

Experiments you can do

Find out about Rikisaurus at your local library. If you can't find information about Rikisaurus check out Allosaurus. These guys are pretty mean and were the great grandparents of the T Rex.

Visit the Fossil Fact Sheet.

Other Investigations

Scientists can tell a lot about a dinosaur from its fossilised tracks. Try making your own tracks at the beach in wet sand or in a large sand pit.

First find a place on the beach that doesn't have any tracks already. Calmly and quietly walk across the beach and make a big loop back away from the tracks. Then run across the beach beside the walking prints. Make a big loop back then beside those prints try walking on all fours using your hands as feet too.

Now, compare all those tracks. Are they the same or different? Get someone to look at the tracks and guess which tracks were made with you walking/running and on all fours.

Jokes

What dinosaur plays hide and seek? A "doyathinkysaurus"!

From Emma

How do you get a Dinosaur to move? With dino-mite

From Jason Steiner.