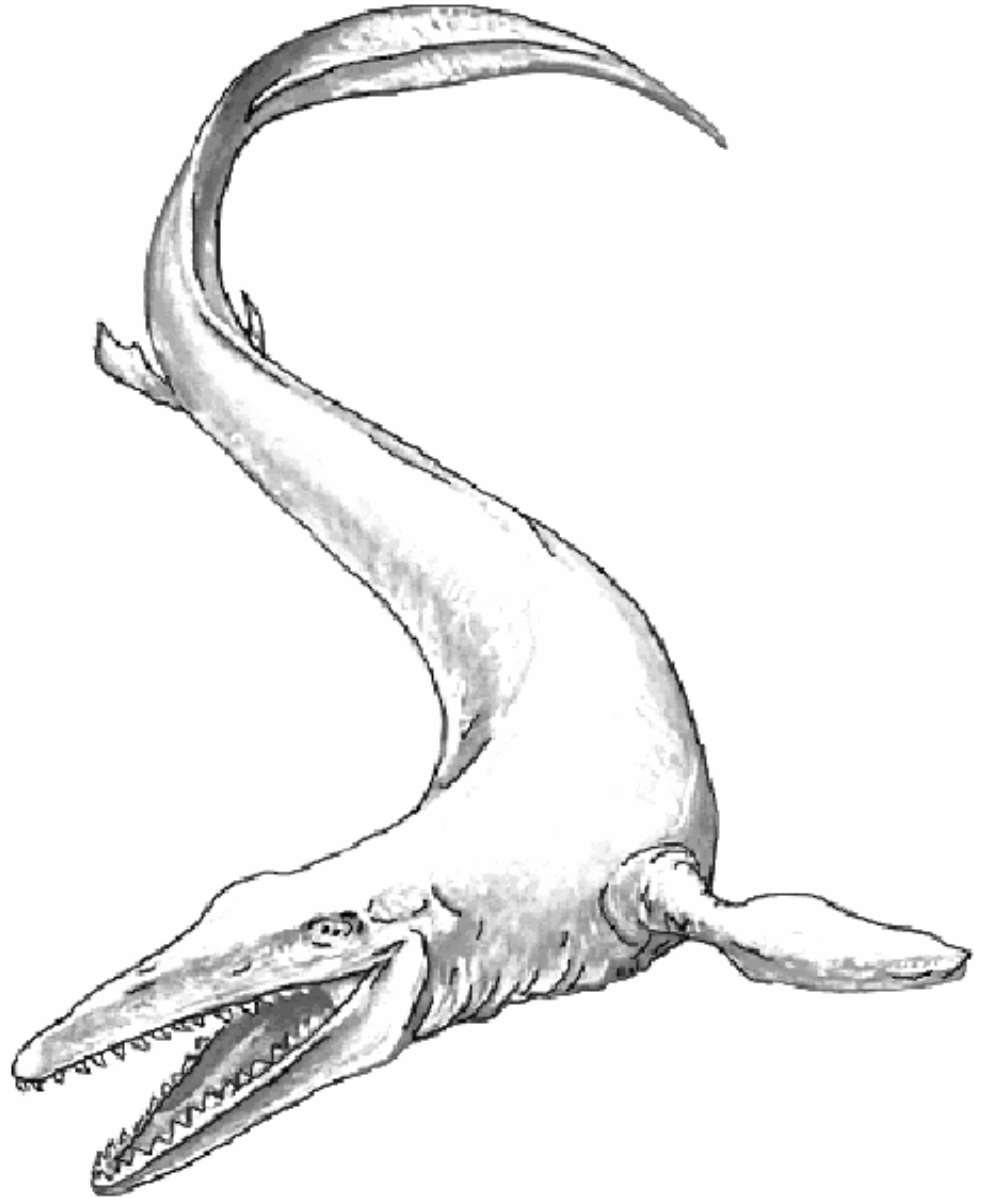


Dino Pit Discoveries

Onion Creek Mosasaur Mosasaurus

Mosasaurus were not dinosaurs, but giant water lizards that lived in the late Cretaceous period. Their flippers and long tails helped them move in the shallow sea that covered this part of Texas about 65 million years ago. Mosasaurus had long sharp teeth perfect for preying upon other marine creatures. The Onion Creek Mosasaur is 30 feet long, and its jaw could open almost three feet to swallow prey! It was found in 1934 by UT geology students.

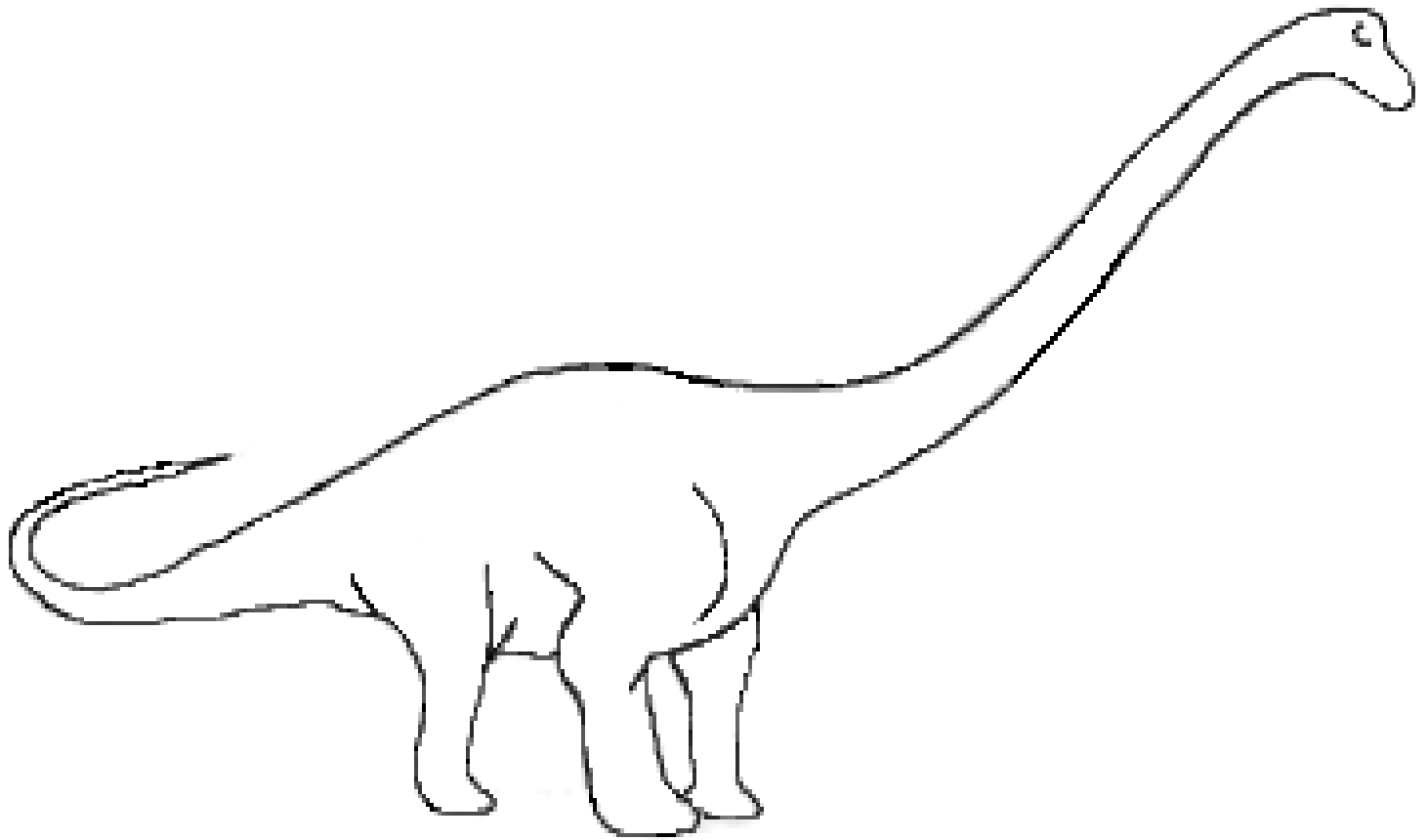


Dino Pit Activity
© Texas Memorial Museum, 2003
Art by John Maisano

Dino Pit Discoveries

Sauropod (lizard-footed) Dinosaur Alamosaurus

Fossils from this sauropod show that Alamosaurus lived about 65 to 70 million years ago. They lived in an area with a warm climate and an abundance of rivers and grasses. Today, we know that area as eastern New Mexico and western Texas - this one was found in Big Bend National Park. With some weighing up to 50 tons, they are among the largest land animals that ever lived!

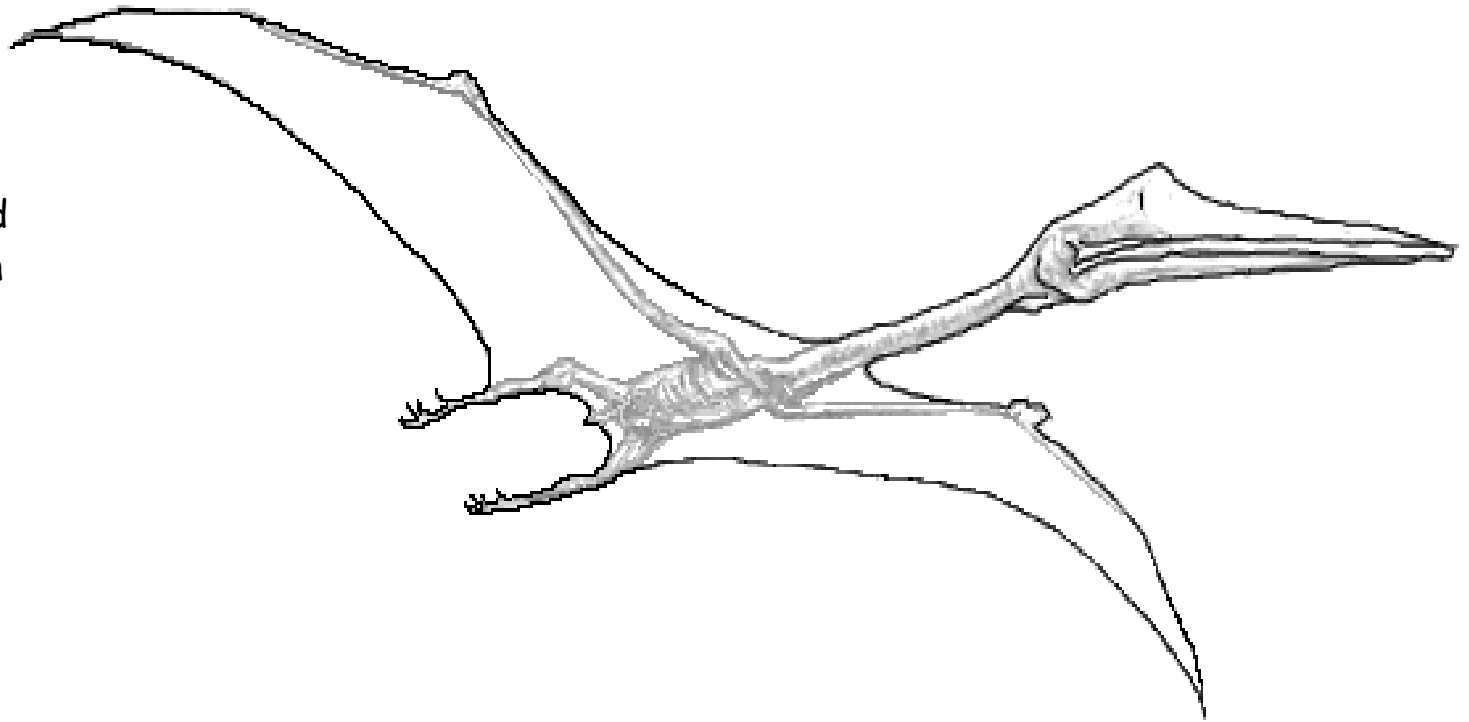


Dino Pit Discoveries

Texas Pterosaur

Quetzalcoatlus

With a wingspan of almost 40 feet, the famous Texas Pterosaur is the largest flying creature ever found on Earth. Its hollow, thin bones allowed it soar through the sky in search of carrion or live prey. Fossils like Quetzalcoatlus are rare because they are often crushed by overlying sediments. This one was found in 1971 in Big Bend National Park. The discovery was named for the winged serpent god of the Aztecs, Quetzalcoatl.

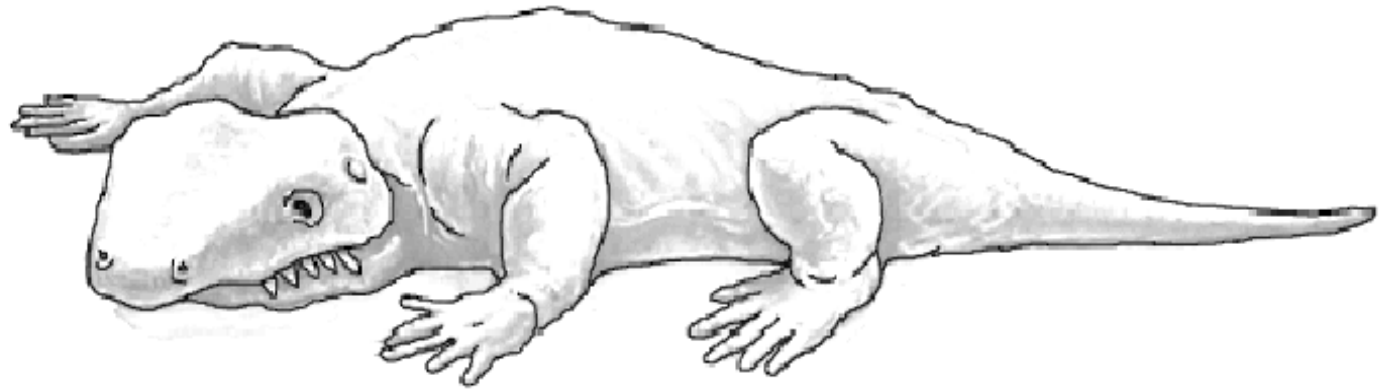


Dino Pit Discoveries

Early Four-Footed Animal

Seymouria

Seymouria lived about 280 million years ago around present-day north Texas. It is an important fossil find because it is probably related to both modern mammals and living reptiles. Scientists study prehistoric land animals like this one to uncover these connections to modern day animals. Seymouria probably ate mostly insects, small animals and dead animals. Its short legs and thick body reveal that it could not move very quickly.



Dino Pit Discoveries

Bouldin Creek Starfish Crateraster

These starfish fossils are special because they are so rare. When starfish die they tend to fall apart easily or get eaten, so these must have been buried quickly in order to be preserved as a fossil.

Starfish are invertebrates that can be found in oceans all over the world. These Crateraster fossils were found in Bouldin Creek, here in Travis County. Imagine, when these starfish lived 85 million years ago, this part of Texas was covered by a shallow sea.

