

Deep Alberta. Fossil Facts and Dinosaur Digs

By John Acorn. 2007. The Royal Tyrrell Museum and The University of Alberta Press, Edmonton, Alberta Canada. XII + 186 pages. \$26.95.

Early on the recognition of our country's rich resources was often a reactive response, rather than proactive endeavours. It was in response to the U.S. activities, primarily those of Barnum Brown (1873–1963) of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, that the Canadian government in early the 20th century began their vertebrate paleontological activities in the Canadian west. First under the Geological Survey of Canada, followed by the National Museum of Canada (now, Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa). These activities were central to what has been called "The Great Canadian Dinosaur Rush" (see David Spalding's *Into the Dinosaurs' Graveyard*, Doubleday Canada, Toronto, 1999).

Despite these efforts, and the bountiful treasures collected and studied, it wasn't until the late 1960s that the Province of Alberta, host of the majority of these activities, was able to begin to take control of its own paleontological resources. Provincialism – restriction of outside exploitation – emerged. This occurred with the materialization of the University of Alberta, Edmonton, establishing its own paleontological program of education and research, supported by the *Vertebrate Paleontology In Alberta* conference in 1963 (University of Alberta, 1965) in addition to the establishment of the Provincial Museum of Alberta (Edmonton), which opened in 1967. What followed was a slow eruption of discovery, research, tourism and marketing savvy. John Acorn's *Deep Alberta* skims the surface of all that is sexy in paleontology in Alberta. And as most will see, there is a lot to witness.

Acorn's guide, based on his CKUA radio series by the same name, is not quite similar to the other popular guides to Alberta's paleontological wealth, *The Land Before Us*, *The Making of Ancient Alberta* by the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology (Lone Pine Press, Edmonton, 1994) is more of a complement to its own gallery (somewhat similar to the Royal Saskatchewan Museum's Earth Sciences gallery guide, *Geological History of Saskatchewan* by John E. Storer (Government of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1989)). Nor is it obviously as in-depth as *Dinosaur Provincial Park* (edited by P. J. Currie, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2005), a symposium volume summarizing all the

major taxonomic groups found within the park. *Deep Alberta* is designed similar to a field-guide, with one-page descriptions and colorful illustrations of species, or non-taxonomic themes.

Alphabetical in its listings of themes, creatures, and places, each item listed is given usually a page of text, accompanied by a full page illustration, often a photograph of an exhibit at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology. These range from mosasaurs, those snake/lizard derivatives from the marine environment of the Cretaceous Period, the *Chasmosaurus*, the horned-dinosaur familiar to the fields of Dinosaur Provincial Park, to the singularly rare *Atrociraptor*, the "savagely robber" skull found near Drumheller – only one partial skull of this is known.

Of place, from the badlands near Drumheller to the Milk River regions are few. The thematic questions include "How do you Know Where to Dig?", an often made public query. Yet, surprisingly, a hot topic like extinction is not addressed. Of people, the likes of Barnum Brown and the Sternberg family (three generations of which have worked in Alberta) are briefly brought to the fore. Appended is a list of most of the Ph.D.'s who are currently at play in the paleontological field of Alberta. Those who have contributed research but lack graduate documentation, or who have provided discoveries without institutional support, are not recognized in this summation.

Since the discovery by Joseph B. Tyrrell (1858–1957) over a century ago of an *Albertosaurus* jaw, later culminating with erection of a provincial museum specifically dedicated to paleontology (The Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology) and the designation of Dinosaur Provincial Park as a World Heritage Site, the Province of Alberta has ample reason to show off its fossil resources. Acorn's *Deep Alberta* is a primer of a primer, a very first introduction to this wealth. Acorn has much to choose from in his summation of paleontology of Alberta and will likely be another useful marketing tool to maintain the visibility of this science in the minds of the public. The treatment of these resources by other provincial jurisdictions should take note. Alberta is not the sole place for paleontology. There is a lot more to see.

TIM T. TOKARYK

Box 163, Eastend, Saskatchewan S0N 0T0 Canada

Gibson's Guide to Bird Watching & Conservation

By Merritt Gibson. 2007. Nimbus Publishing Limited, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. 214 pages. \$16.46.

This small bird watching guide to the maritime provinces is a tribute to the birds of Nova Scotia, Prince

Edward Island and New Brunswick. It is also a tribute to the ornithologists and bird-watchers of the area, the unsung heroes who for the past several decades have been the backbone of bird conservation and study to preserve habitat, protect endangered species and pro-