

# Parasaurolophus

PAR-uh-SAW-toh-LOH-fus

**W**ith its snout bones drawn up into a giant snorkel-like structure,

*Parasaurolophus* was one of the most bizarre of all the hadrosaurs. It lacked a hole in its apex, and because of this it is clear that this bony structure was not used as a breathing apparatus while the animal was swimming or feeding underwater. It seems more likely that it helped *Parasaurolophus* produce noises for signaling to mates or, if it was colored, for courtship displays. We know from the specimens that have been discovered that soft tissues adorned the bony crest.

The first skeleton of *Parasaurolophus* was collected in 1921 by Levi Sternberg in the region of southern Alberta, Canada, that is now the Dinosaur Provincial Park. This early find is still the most complete specimen to have been discovered. Three species of *Parasaurolophus* are recognized

## FIELD NOTES

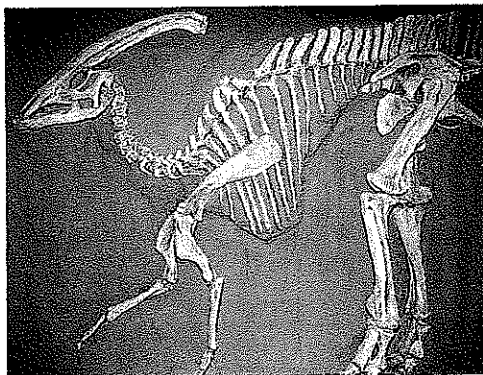
- Side-ridged lizard
- 35 feet (10.5 m)
- Late Cretaceous
- Montana, New Mexico, USA; Alberta, Canada
- Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada; Los Angeles County Museum, USA

from their skulls. *P. cyrtocrystatus* had a short crest; on the other two species—*P. walkeri* and *P. tubicen*—the crests were much longer. The internal structure of the crest, which, unlike the crest of *Saurolophus*, had a hollow area that connected with the nostrils and the back of the throat, was more complex in *P. tubicen* than in other *Parasaurolophus* species.

Like all hadrosaurs, *Parasaurolophus* was a plant-eater. It had many closely compacted teeth, each of which had a central ridge. The

teeth formed a strong dental battery that made it easier to chew tough vegetable matter

The principal dangers this dinosaur faced were from the larger predators such as *Albertosaurus*. *Parasaurolophus* probably sought protection from its enemies by living in large herds, in the same way that herbivores that inhabit the African plains do today.



A cast of the almost complete skeleton of *Parasaurolophus* that Levi Sternberg found in 1921.