

# The Coolest Dinosaur Discoveries in 2020

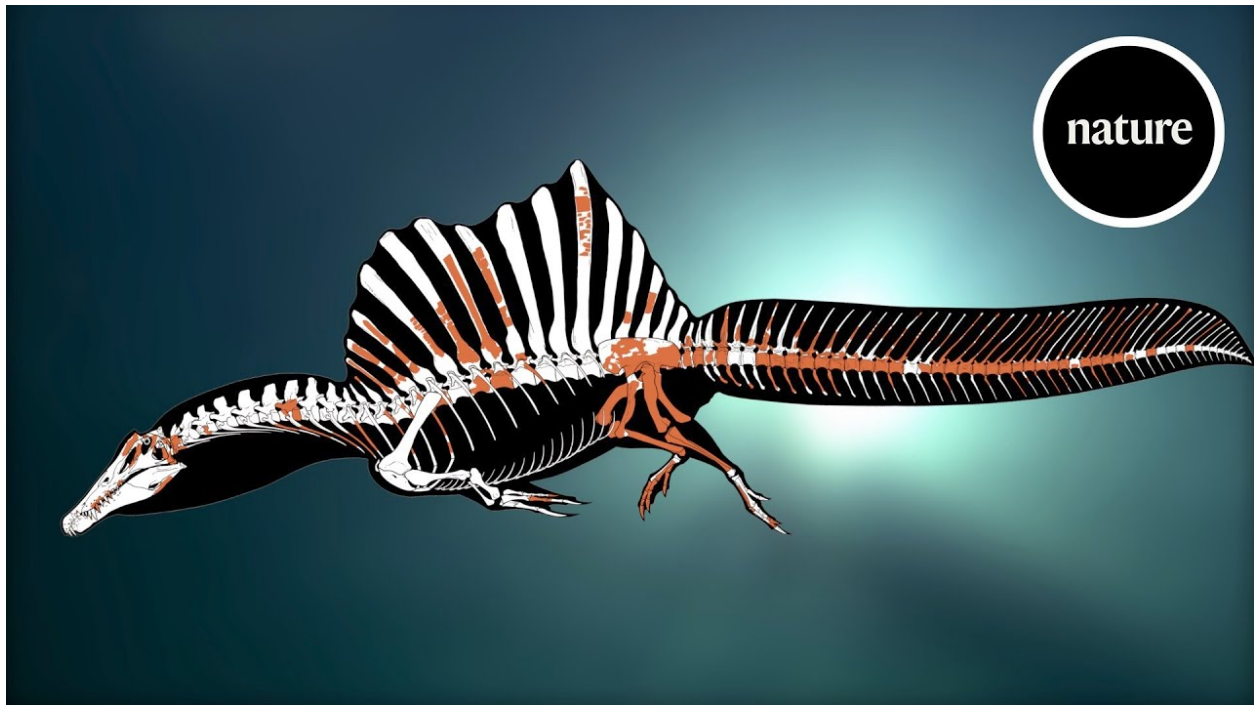
Adapted from Live Science



The newly described "reaper of death" is a cousin of Tyrannosaurus rex.

Dinosaurs went extinct 66 million years ago, but we're still learning their secrets. Here are some mind-blowing dino discoveries that happened in 2020!.

## 1. Spinosaurus could swim



Scientists thought for years that [\*Spinosaurus\*](#) could swim, but did not have many fossils to prove it. The most complete specimen had been destroyed during World War II. But now, the analysis of a *Spinosaurus* tail reveals that the tail was broad and paddle-like, perfect for swimming!

"This dinosaur was actively hunting prey in the water by swimming, not just standing in shallow waters waiting for fish to swim by," a paleontologist said.

## 2. Best-preserved dino stomach



The nodosaur *Borealopelta markmitchelli* preferred to eat certain kinds of plants, an analysis of its fossilized stomach contents reveals.

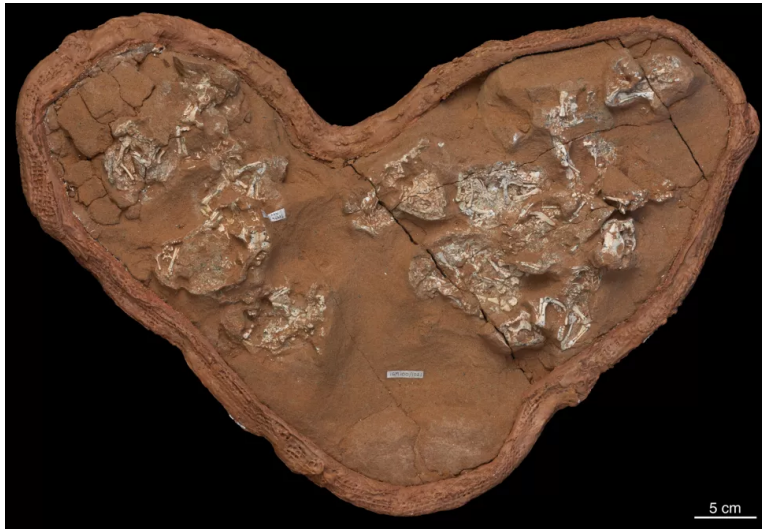
It's challenging to know exactly what herbivorous (plant-eating) dinosaurs ate — leaves and other plant materials don't fossilize well.

But the discovery of a nodosaur fossil with a well-preserved stomach has helped shed light on this mystery. Researchers analyzed the 112 million-year-old beast's fossilized stomach contents, and learned that the nodosaur, named *Borealopelta markmitchelli*, was a picky eater.

The 18-foot-long (5.5 meters) *B. markmitchelli* ate only certain types of ferns, and apparently it preferred leaves to stems and twigs.

Bon appetit!

### 3. Soft-shelled eggs



A clutch group of fossilized eggs, also known as a “clutch”.

The first dinosaur eggs may have had soft shells, a June study in the journal [Nature](#) found. Researchers found ancient eggs from two dinosaur species — the horned dinosaur *Protoceratops* and the long-necked *Mussaurus*.

Another group of scientists in Antarctica found the 68 million-year-old soft-shell egg of a mosasaur, which is not a dinosaur but a reptilian sea monster that lived during the dinosaur age. It's still a mystery whether this football-size mosasaur egg was laid and hatched in the water, or on dry land like a turtle.

## 4. The T. Rex's 'Cousin



Researchers have only two skulls from this new species, but here is what the dinosaur may have looked like nearly 80 million years ago.

[\*Tyrannosaurus rex\*](#) has a newfound cousin with a fearsome name — the "reaper of death," which was found in Alberta, Canada. This 79.5 million-year-old beast (*Thanatotheristes degrootorum*) is the oldest named tyrannosaur on record from North America. It's also the first newly named tyrannosaur from Canada in 50 years.

The "reaper of death" had unique vertical ridges that ran from its eyes along its upper snout. Scientists aren't sure why the carnivore had these ridges, but if you were its prey, they were possibly one of the last things you saw before the reaper made you its dinner!

## 5. The dinosaur that wasn't



This 99 million-year-old creature's skull is preserved in amber.

A 99 million-year-old piece of amber with a mystery creature's skull preserved inside made headlines when researchers said it might be the smallest dinosaur on record. This bird-like dinosaur was said to have about 100 sharp and tiny teeth and weigh just 0.07 ounces (2 grams).

However, other specimens of this animal have now been analyzed further, and it appears that it's not a dinosaur, but a lizard.

Even so, the researchers of the retracted study are still excited to celebrate this weird ancient animal. "It's just a really weird animal and an important discovery regardless of whether it's a weird bird or a weird lizard with a bird head," a researcher said.

