

The image features two fossil specimens. The primary specimen is a dark, elongated fossilized jawbone with a row of sharp, pointed teeth. The secondary specimen is a lighter-colored, ribbed fossil fragment, possibly a rib or a similar structure, positioned above the jawbone. The background is a dark red with a faint, repeating pattern of the jawbone fossil.

ROYAL TYRRELL MUSEUM

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Discovery is at the heart of everything we do at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology.



Our researchers make extraordinary discoveries connecting us to Earth's prehistoric past. Our staff uncover new discoveries in the field, and through their connections with our communities and partners. Our visitors make discoveries when exploring our exhibits and engaging in our programs.

Contained in this Annual Report is a review of 2024, with highlights of discoveries made by our remarkable team. In the spring we opened a new exhibit, *First Life*, that features some of the earliest forms of life on Earth. Several months later, welcomed our colleagues in Alberta's museum community and hosted a fashion show from the Indigenous Empowerment Fashion Collective in *Dinosaur Hall*. And we engaged with hundreds of thousands of people from around the world, both inside and outside of the Museum, through our exhibits and programs.

We are more than halfway through our 2021 – 26 Strategic Plan. The goals we identified continue to drive every project and initiative we embark on, particularly as we look ahead to 2025. The coming year marks a significant milestone for

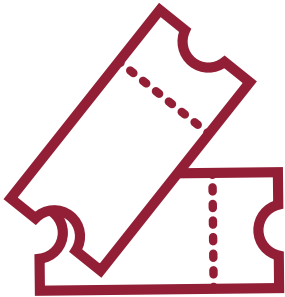
the Museum, as we prepare to celebrate 40 years of telling the story of Alberta's palaeontological past. Our celebrations will be a combination of sharing some of our noteworthy discoveries, showing gratitude to the communities that have supported us for the last four decades, and offering a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will be kept under wraps for a few more months.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of the Royal Tyrrell Museum Cooperating Society, their members, our community colleagues, visitors, teachers, researchers, program participants, and everyone who engages with us online and in-person.

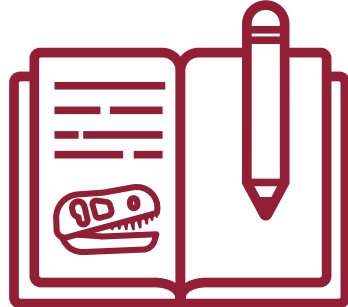
This report highlights the brilliance and dedication of the Museum's staff and volunteers. Through their work, we created and shared opportunities, knowledge, stories, space, expertise, resources, and our passion for palaeontology.

Lisa Making, Executive Director
Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology

2024 IN NUMBERS



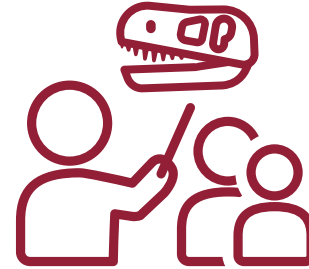
Welcomed
528,235
visitors



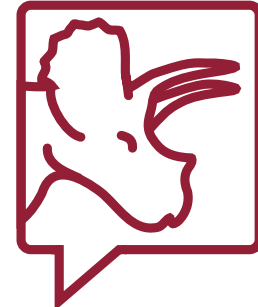
Published
9
peer-reviewed
scientific papers



Delivered public programs to
34,725
onsite participants



Reached
11,000+
participants in
290
Distance Learning
programs



Social media engagement:
666,000
actions
1.2 million
video views



Social media reach:
7.5+ million

**2024
PROGRESS
ON OUR
STRATEGIC
GOALS**



BE A CENTRE OF SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE



Dr. Ilaria Paparella joined the Museum's research staff in 2024 as Curator of Fossil Marine Reptiles.

We will strengthen our position as a centre of excellence for palaeontology, and a leader in advancing research, knowledge, and palaeontological stewardship.

Our Preservation and Research team completed Research and Collections policies in 2024 that will form the basis of longer-term strategies to guide the Museum's work.

We added roughly 2,500 specimens to our Collections in 2024. Our crews excavated and collected several impressive fossils, including the skull of a juvenile *Edmontosaurus* along the North Saskatchewan River near Devon (found by a member of the public); a beautiful fossilized feather from Dinosaur Provincial Park; and many exquisitely preserved plant specimens from Palaeocene deposits at the Livingston development in Calgary. A large mosasaur specimen collected from the Enchanted Design ammolite mine near Lethbridge was an exciting industry discovery.

In the Preparation Lab, technicians completed preparation of an articulated ornithomimid from Dinosaur Provincial Park, a mosasaur skull from the Korite ammolite mine, and ankylosaur tail clubs from Dinosaur Provincial Park and Horseshoe Canyon.

We published the scientific description of a pterosaur vertebra with evidence of bite marks, likely from a crocodile. Other 2024 research highlights included a study on how pterosaurs might have used their head crests to steer during flight; the first Palaeocene record of taeniodonts (large, herbivorous mammals) in Canada; and evidence for a Mediterranean climate in the western Canadian High Arctic during the Eocene (~40 million years ago).

We look forward to exciting developments with the recent addition of two new researchers to our team: Dr. Ilaria Paparella (Curator of Fossil Marine Reptiles), and Dr. Alfred Lemierre (Dr. Elizabeth Nicholls Postdoctoral Fellow).

STRENGTHEN PUBLIC VALUE

Visitors to our new *First Life* exhibit discover the fascinating story Canadian fossils tell us about early life.

SHINING A LIGHT ON THE BURGESS SHALE

Turn the handles below to reduce the glare on the specimens and reveal more anatomical details.

Burgess Shale fossils are preserved as shiny, grey-black carbon impressions. Researchers use cross-polarized lighting to observe them more clearly.

We will continuously enhance the Museum's public value by ensuring our exhibits and programs are widely accessible, regularly evaluated, and updated with new content to reflect recent scientific research.

The Museum's education staff reviewed programming goals, evaluation initiatives, and best practices in 2024, and updated policies and offerings. Selected school programs and Distance Learning programs were adjusted based on curriculum changes and results from pilot testing, teacher focus groups, and ongoing evaluation efforts.

Our *Virtual Visit* Distance Learning program, revamped this year, was recognized with an Interpretation Canada Award of Excellence—Silver. The Distance Learning Program also received the 2023 – 24 Pinnacle Award for outstanding teacher ratings on programs booked through the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration.

Highlights of public outreach activities in 2024 included staffing a display booth at Calgary's Alberta Day event at Heritage Park on September 1, and offering programming at the TELUS Spark Science Centre in November.

Exclusive programming for adults continued to be popular in 2024, with two sold-out events. We held our *Bones & Brews*

evening at Drumheller's Boston Pizza in January, and a Halloween installment in our *Dinosaurs After Dusk* series at the Museum in October.

On the exhibits side, we opened our newest gallery, *First Life*, in May 2024. With captivating and colourful new videos, illustrations, models, and hands-on interactive activities, the exhibit explains how life evolved—from its earliest beginnings, to the major diversification of complex life forms known as the Cambrian Explosion. *First Life* features some of the oldest known fossils, including the earliest evidence of life in Alberta.

Our *Fossils in Focus* exhibit highlights current research and exceptional fossils from the Museum's vast collection. The current installation includes a skeleton of the marine reptile *Prognathodon*, a neck bone from the flying reptile *Cryodrakon*, and two complete shells of the large turtle *Basilemys*.

Also opened in 2024, our *Perspectives* exhibit features the photography of Andre Gogol, who created a series of detailed images of specimens from the Museum's collections.



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

The Alberta Museums Association 2024 Fall Gathering included a spectacular fashion show from the Indigenous Empowerment Fashion Collective in our *Dinosaur Hall*.

We will connect palaeontology to relevant scientific and cultural matters. Our relationships and partnerships will bolster our efforts to achieve mutually beneficial strategic goals.

Strong relationships within the museum community enable the Royal Tyrrell Museum and our peer organizations to achieve mutually beneficial strategic goals. We were pleased to welcome colleagues from across the province when the Alberta Museums Association hosted their Fall Gathering here.

By demonstrating how our work meets the highest standards of museum practice, the Royal Tyrrell Museum earned the Recognized Museum Leader designation in 2024 from the Alberta Museums Association's accreditation program.

We foster positive relationships with journalists interested in sharing the Museum's stories with the world. Coverage by major outlets of our new *First Life* exhibit was a media highlight of the year, with more than 71 million media impressions.

Collaboration with tourism organizations Travel Drumheller and Travel Alberta strengthened our relationships with our communities and media contacts near and far.

Locally, we supported Travel Drumheller's Summer Visitor Engagement Strategy, and participated in events such as the Jurassic Jamboree World Record Attempt and the *Why Dinosaurs?* movie premiere at the Napier Theatre.

Museum educators interacted with long-term care residents at the Drumheller Health Centre and gave career presentations at local high schools. Our fabricators hosted high school construction class students to learn about practical applications of their skills. In addition to working with existing college intern programs, a broader Museum team laid the groundwork for new opportunities to accommodate high school work experience students, with the aim of nurturing talent for future staffing initiatives in several areas of the Museum.

A photograph of two elderly women in a museum. The woman on the left is wearing a teal top and glasses, pointing at a large, textured exhibit. The woman on the right is wearing a maroon top and glasses, looking up and smiling. The exhibit appears to be a large-scale model or sculpture of a natural scene, possibly a forest or a cave, with various elements like trees and animals. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor museum setting.

BE DIVERSE, EQUITABLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND INCLUSIVE

Making our exhibits and programs more physically, intellectually, and culturally accessible improves the Museum experience for all visitors.

We will provide an exemplary level of service and experience to ensure all feel welcome.

The Museum welcomed 528,235 visitors in 2024, once again exceeding our previous record for paid attendance.

Alberta's Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women offers free admission to all provincial heritage sites and museums for Family Day and the Alberta Culture Days weekend. Admission fees were waived for nearly 16,500 visitors to the Royal Tyrrell Museum on these days in 2024. Funding through the Royal Tyrrell Museum Cooperating Society's Fee Assistance Program enabled an additional 116 people to visit the Museum this year.

The Museum's Educators, Gallery Experience Officers, Visitor Services Representatives, and staff in the Museum Shop strive to provide excellent customer service. Serving and engaging our audiences is a priority for our exhibits and programs. Our team collaborated with peer organizations and specialists this year to further improve the visitor experience. For example, we connected with specialists

on neurodivergency and accessibility, and consulted with a Government of Alberta service dog expert. With support from the Royal Tyrrell Museum Cooperating Society, staff participated in a Truth and Reconciliation Learning Session. We are continuing to gather information that will strengthen our knowledge and inform our planning.

The Royal Tyrrell Museum is proud to be part of the Canoo program, offered through the Institute for Canadian Citizenship. The Canoo App provides free entry to over 2,000 partner experiences for new citizens, as well as permanent residents in their first five years of residency. This summer, the Museum ranked ninth for most Canoo member admissions in Canada, and second in Alberta. From July – September 2024, we hosted 4,347 Canoo member visits. We were visited by Canoo members from 89 countries of origin; the top three countries were India, the Philippines, and China.

EXPAND FINANCIAL RESILIENCY

Revenue from the Museum Shop funds critical research, programs, and exhibit development.

We will ensure a robust, diversified, and high-performing portfolio of income streams.

The Royal Tyrrell Museum Cooperating Society is a non-profit, charitable organization that plays a key role in helping the Museum achieve its mandate. Through proceeds from the management of the Museum Shop, memberships, and donations, the Cooperating Society provides essential ongoing support for the Museum's research, exhibits, and educational programming.

On the individual giving front, the Cooperating Society collected donations totalling over \$34,000 in 2024. More than \$10,000 was received from the Estate of William G. Mellett—in addition to the \$100,000 bequest received from the estate the previous year. We are deeply grateful to William G. Mellett, and all dedicated supporters who choose to secure the Museum's future in such a meaningful way.

The Royal Tyrrell Museum Shop generated sales exceeding \$3.8 million in 2024, selling 288,400+ individual items. Museum Shop products were donated to 26 community initiatives for silent auctions and other fundraising efforts.

Highlights of the valuable support the Cooperating Society provided to the Museum in 2024 included funding for: visiting researchers; public talks; Badlands Science Camp; the hiring of Dr. Alfred Lemierre, Dr. Elizabeth Nicholls Postdoctoral Fellow; and content, expertise, and assets for exhibits and educational programs.

Following approval of the Royal Tyrrell Museum Cooperating Society Strategic Plan, the Cooperating Society advanced work to implement initial priorities, including recruitment to fill vacant board positions and hire a Membership Coordinator.



GROW STRATEGICALLY

There are roughly 180,000 specimens in the Museum's collection. About 3,000 are added each year.

We will work to ensure our physical, organizational, and technological capacities are aligned with our strategic plan, to enhance visitor experience, and advance core museological and research priorities.

Ensuring we understand the needs and expectations of the Museum's stakeholders is a key element to support future strategic growth. As a public institution, we strive to engage with the communities we serve, and gain insights to help us enhance the Museum's public value. In 2024, we recruited a Head of Community Engagement. This new role will guide and strengthen our work to create, build, and maintain relationships with diverse communities.

Since opening in 1985, the Museum has experienced exponential growth. Our Collections expand each year as a result of valuable fieldwork, research, and stewardship activities. We can all take pride in the impressive trajectory of our attendance.

On both of these fronts, necessary and exciting growth has placed significant pressure on the Museum's 40-year-old building, even with two expansions to the facility. In recent years, we have been monitoring and evaluating how our visitors engage with the Museum. We need to conduct ongoing assessments of how we can improve visitors' experiences today, and also for years to come. In 2025 – 2026, Museum staff will work together to reflect on the organization's past, evaluate where we are now, and look forward to where we want to be in the coming decades. With this information, we will build a vision for the future of the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology.

ROYAL TYRRELL MUSEUM

Alberta