

ROYAL TYRRELL MUSEUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

All of us faced unprecedented challenges in 2020–2021. Fortunately, these times have also offered hope, learning, and some unexpected silver linings. At the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology and throughout our sector, I've been inspired by how museum workers have adapted, and implemented many new initiatives. I am constantly amazed and humbled by the agility and commitment of our team.



Like many organizations, we experienced the longest closure in our history—178 days. Our team worked hard to find new ways to connect with our audiences and ensure we were ready to offer something new when we reopened.

Our Distance Learning team delivered a record-breaking number of programs to participants around the world. Our social media platforms connected millions of followers with fun, educational, and creative Museum content. Our exhibit team completed our newest gallery, *Cenozoic: The Rise of Mammals*.

We continued to discover, preserve, and study Alberta's fossil resources. Our popular Speaker Series successfully moved online. Museum researchers published 22 papers; highlights included a new mammal species from the Willow Creek Formation, facial bite marks in tyrannosaurs, and tyrannosaur bite-force and feeding behaviours.

As restrictions eased, visitors returned in increasing numbers. Our popular Badlands Science Camp, operated by the Royal Tyrrell Museum Cooperating Society, adapted to COVID-19 protocols by offering

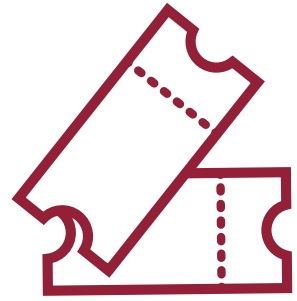
day camps, rather than overnight experiences. Finally, the exhibits team completed the annual reinstallation of our rotating display, *Fossils in Focus*, highlighting recent finds and current scientific research happening at the Museum.

On top of all of these successes, Guinness World Records recognized five of our most iconic specimens as world record holders!

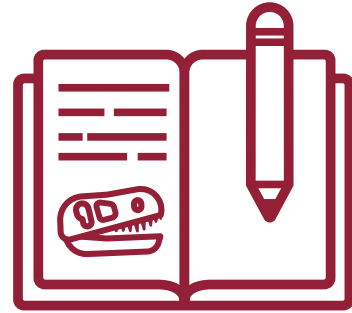
The year ahead still holds many unknowns. However, it is important that we celebrate our many recent successes and our team's stellar performance. Our supporters can be certain that we will continue to adapt to what's happening in our world, and will strive to create safe and engaging visitor experiences, both in person, and online.

Lisa Making, Executive Director
Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology

2021 IN NUMBERS



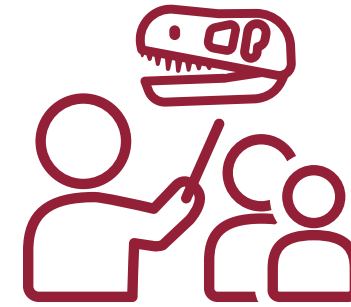
Welcomed
312,500
visitors



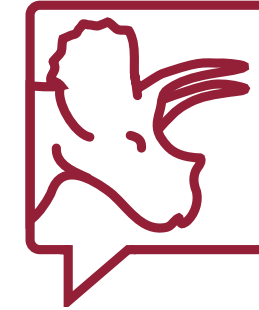
Published
22
peer-reviewed
scientific papers



Delivered public programs to
15,000+
onsite participants



Reached
29,000+
participants in
680
distance learning programs



Social media engagement:
1+ million
actions
1.5+ million
video views



Social media reach:
16 million

**2021
PROGRESS
ON OUR
STRATEGIC
GOALS**



BE A CENTRE OF SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

Five extraordinary Museum specimens are highlighted in the 2022 Guinness World Records book.



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

The Museum's Preservation and Research team continued its important work throughout 2021, both in the lab, and in the field. New discoveries included a partial duck-billed dinosaur skeleton and a partial horned dinosaur skull from Dinosaur Provincial Park. Reports from the public led to the recovery of a partial tyrannosaur skeleton in the Drumheller town limits, a lower jaw and horn core near Tolman Bridge, a turtle jaw in Calgary, and partial skulls of an ankylosaur and a horned dinosaur in Drumheller.

The research team published more than 20 peer-reviewed articles, including a paper by Dr. François Therrien about tyrannosaur bite force and feeding behaviour, and a study by Dr. Caleb Brown on tyrannosaur face-biting.

Sharing our scientific findings with the world is vital to the Museum's success. Media relations training and resources were shared with our scientific

spokespeople to enhance the researchers' capacity to communicate with the public about their often complicated scientific work.

The Communications and Research teams collaborated on numerous high-profile news stories. One highlight involved public communications about five record-breaking Museum specimens acknowledged in the 2022 Guinness World Records book.

Alberta has one of the world's most successful fossil protection laws. The Museum oversees, administers, and enforces the *Historical Resources Act* that protects the fossilized remains of plants and animals, or traces of their activities, in the province. One-hundred and three permits to excavate palaeontological resources were issued in 2021. Information about the *Act* was shared with internal and external stakeholder groups to ensure Alberta's significant palaeontological resources are protected and preserved for future generations.

STRENGTHEN PUBLIC VALUE

The brand new major exhibit *Cenozoic: The Rise of Mammals* opened in 2021.



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 Royal Tyrrell Museum is fortunate to have a talented exhibit development and production team. One of our strengths is having current research on display, and the ability to update and change exhibits using in-house resources. When visitors were permitted to return to Alberta museums in June 2021 following widespread closures, they were treated to a completely new exhibit that replaced our original *Mammal Hall*. *Cenozoic: The Rise of Mammals* covers the K-Pg extinction event 66 million years ago, and features interactives, videos, some very large mammal skeletons, and two spectacular dioramas.

Our rotating *Fossils in Focus* exhibit is updated every October to highlight the latest and most exciting fieldwork and research findings. The current installation includes the first new tyrannosaur species discovered in Canada in 50 years, stomach contents from the world's best-preserved armoured dinosaur, and bone disease in a duck-billed dinosaur's tail vertebrae.

Research continued on best practices for exhibit design and program development. A new Program Steering Group was initiated in 2021 as a direct result of our recent Strategic Planning efforts. The Group will play an important role to align programs with strategic priorities, and will ensure new program development addresses gaps and underserved audiences, such as seniors. Educators developed and delivered pilot virtual presentations for local seniors this year.

Our 2021 Distance Learning Studio programs reached participants at libraries, corporate events, retirement centres, preschools, universities, a First Nations science camp, community groups, and others. More than 680 programs were delivered to about 29,000 people. The Distance Learning team connected to 11 Canadian provinces, 36 American states, and 13 countries worldwide.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Museum supporters John and Sandra DeGroot found skull fragments on the shore of the Bow River in 2008. The fragments belonged to *Thanatotheristes degrootorum*, a new tyrannosaur species named in their honour.



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

Our team is committed to building and strengthening productive, mutually beneficial relationships. Next steps will include creating stakeholder engagement protocols for participation in project planning and project management processes.

Our scientists and communications specialists continue to collaborate on providing high-quality content to the media, to help position the Museum as North America's authoritative palaeontology resource. Public and media interest in the Museum's fieldwork, collections, exhibits, and research generates attendance and sustains support for our work.

Our annual Speaker Series, sponsored by the Royal Tyrrell Museum Cooperating Society, was offered virtually for the first time in 2021. This permitted more attendees to connect online from all around the world. Using new formats and approaches for these presentations provides our team with an exciting opportunity to evaluate how well the initiative is reaching and serving its audiences, and explore options for the future direction of the series.

A photograph of two women in a museum setting. The woman on the left is wearing a teal top and glasses, and the woman on the right is wearing a maroon top and glasses. They are both looking at a large, dark fossil specimen mounted on a wall. The woman on the right is pointing at the fossil with her right hand. The background is slightly blurred, showing other museum exhibits and lighting.

BE DIVERSE, EQUITABLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND INCLUSIVE

Visitors and Museum staff benefit from the diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion goals set out in our Strategic Plan.

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

Research to benchmark accessibility standards and best practices will help us advance our goal of ensuring equitable, fair, and just treatment for all our visitors, and everyone working at the Museum. Consultation with stakeholder groups has enabled us to initiate improvements to the physical, intellectual, and cultural accessibility of the Museum and its varied programs.

Several Museum staff have been working with the Diversity and Inclusion Group of Alberta's Ministry of Culture and Status of Women. The Government of Alberta is committed to a diverse public service workforce that reflects the qualities and differences of the broader population it serves. Staff training on topics such as "Respect in the Workplace" and "Unconscious Bias" fosters a positive environment for learning and growth.

EXPAND FINANCIAL RESILIENCY

In response to public health measures, and to protect the safety of campers and staff, we offered our successful Badlands Science Camp in a day camp format in 2021.

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

In collaboration with the Royal Tyrrell Museum Cooperating Society, the Museum is working to develop, diversify, and enhance memberships, donations, and earned income streams. Proceeds from membership sales and Museum Shop purchases support the Museum's research, fieldwork, exhibits, and educational programs. The Museum thanks the Cooperating Society for funding a major portion of our newest gallery, *Cenozoic: The Rise of Mammals*. The Society also sponsored our extremely successful 2021 Badlands Science Camp, which was offered as a series of day camps, rather than our standard residential camp format.

Sales were brisk in the first year of operations for our new online Museum Shop. In-house designers developed several popular new products for the Shop, directly related to the Museum's specimens and exhibits.

Membership sales were steady in 2021. The Museum and the Cooperating Society gratefully acknowledge all of our members and donors. This year, we launched a "member of the month" program to recognize our wonderful supporters.

The Museum and Cooperating Society will focus on benchmarking individual and corporate giving in 2022, to advance a fundraising proposal recently approved by the Cooperating Society Board of Directors.



GROW STRATEGICALLY

Frontline staff are dedicated to ensuring visitors can safely enjoy the Museum.

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.

The Royal Tyrrell Museum's large and diverse collection includes roughly 170,000 specimens. Most are stored at the Museum, but some are held in secondary offsite facilities. Business plans and capital project proposals are being explored that would prioritize collections processing and storage capacity to meet current and future needs.

Another team is investigating ways to optimize admission efficiency. Advance ticket purchase requirements, contactless payment, timed entry, and ticket scanning were instituted in 2020, partly in response to changing needs and restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We continued to evaluate and refine admissions processes over the course of 2021. Visitor Services staff and Gallery Experience Officers continue to collaborate closely to ensure visitors can safely enjoy the Museum.

ROYAL TYRRELL MUSEUM

Alberta