



**T. rex:  
The Killer  
Question**  
Information pack

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# Exhibition overview

## Was *Tyrannosaurus rex* a predator or a scavenger?

### You decide the killer question...

*T. rex: The Killer Question* tackles the monster mystery of how *T. rex* might have obtained its food. Was it a ferocious hunter – the traditional image of *T. rex*? Or was it a scavenger? Or could it have been something in between – an opportunist and an ambush predator who relied on easy pickings, whether alive or dead? This exhibition presents the evidence.

*T. rex: The Killer Question* delivers the facts we definitely know about *T. rex*, and the broader issues of how scientists obtain and interpret the fossil evidence.

The exhibition is aimed at families with children aged seven to 11, and school groups.

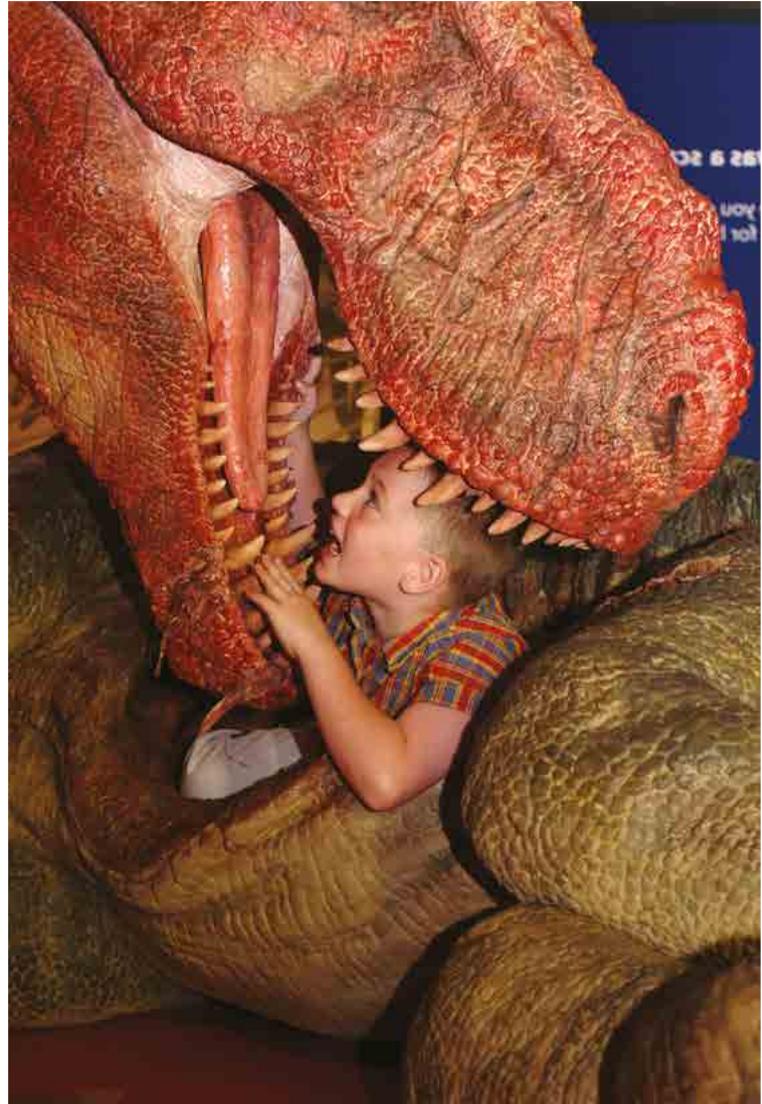


# Aims of the exhibition

- the incontrovertible facts about *T. rex* – what we know
- the fact that fossil evidence underpins our knowledge and all debates about *T. rex*
- how scientists use observations about living animals, and fossils from other dinosaurs, to interpret *T. rex* fossils
- both sides of the debate over whether *T. rex* was a predator or a scavenger

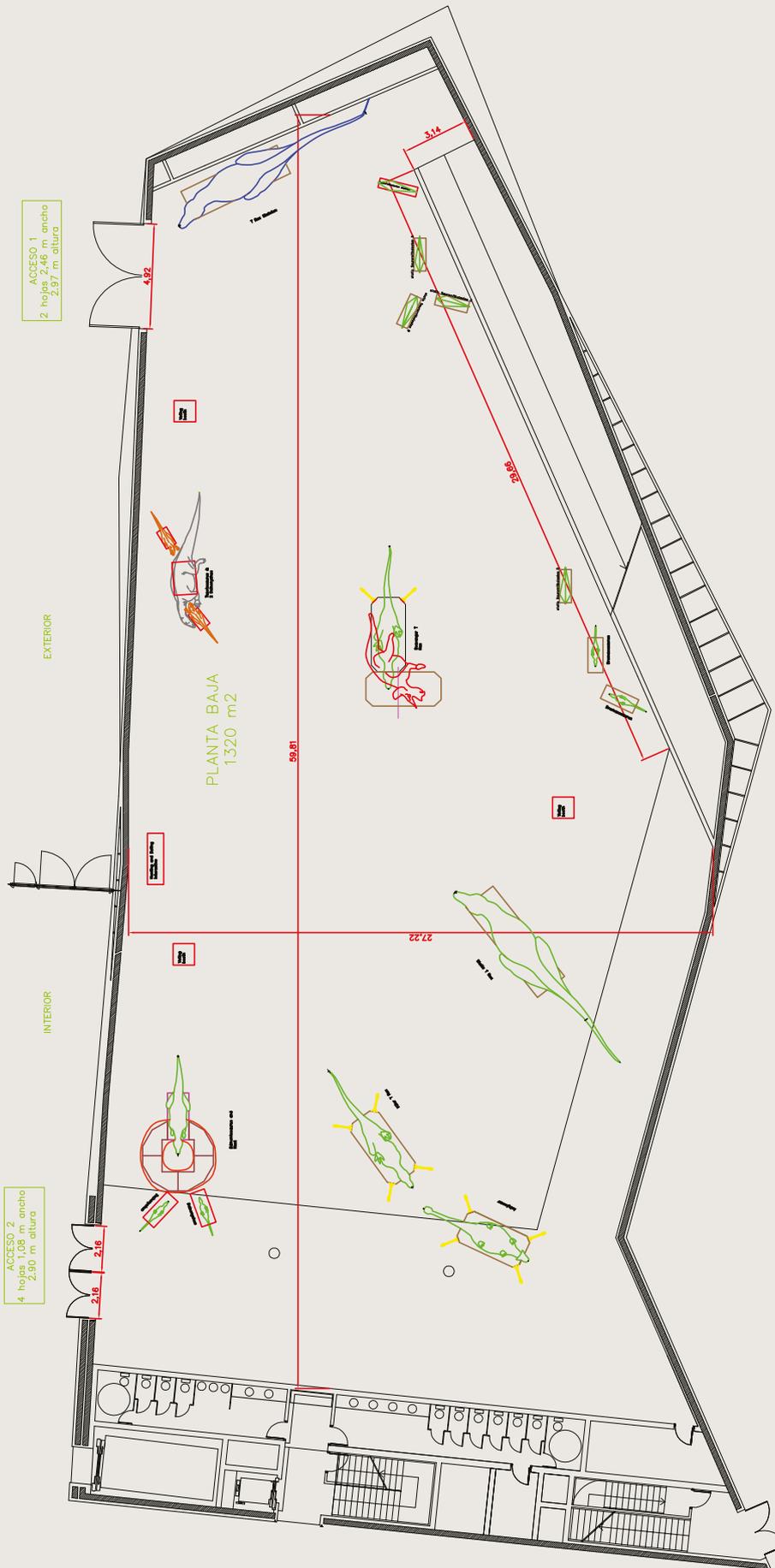
The mood and design of the exhibition will:

- create a fun, enjoyable atmosphere for families
- convey a sense of excitement and wonder about *T. rex*
- present science as something with which everyone can engage



# Gallery plan

Please note: as the size and shape of the display area may vary from venue to venue, it is not always possible to show the exhibition in its original form and layout.



# Scenes and storyline



## Life-size *T. rex* and *Saurornitholestes* skeletons

Towering, life-size casts of *T. rex* and *Saurornitholestes* skeletons emphasise the idea that fossil evidence underpins our current interpretations of *T. rex* and give visitors the opportunity to compare the two.

### Objectives

- to re-establish what is meant by scavenger and predator
- to present the arguments and evidence for active hunting and scavenging, looking at arms, legs, eyes, teeth/jaws and the olfactory bulb cavity in the skull
- to show how scientists interpret fossil evidence using observations about living animals and fossils of other dinosaurs
- to encourage visitors to compare certain physical aspects of *T. rex* with those of *Saurornitholestes*



## Three *Saurornitholestes*

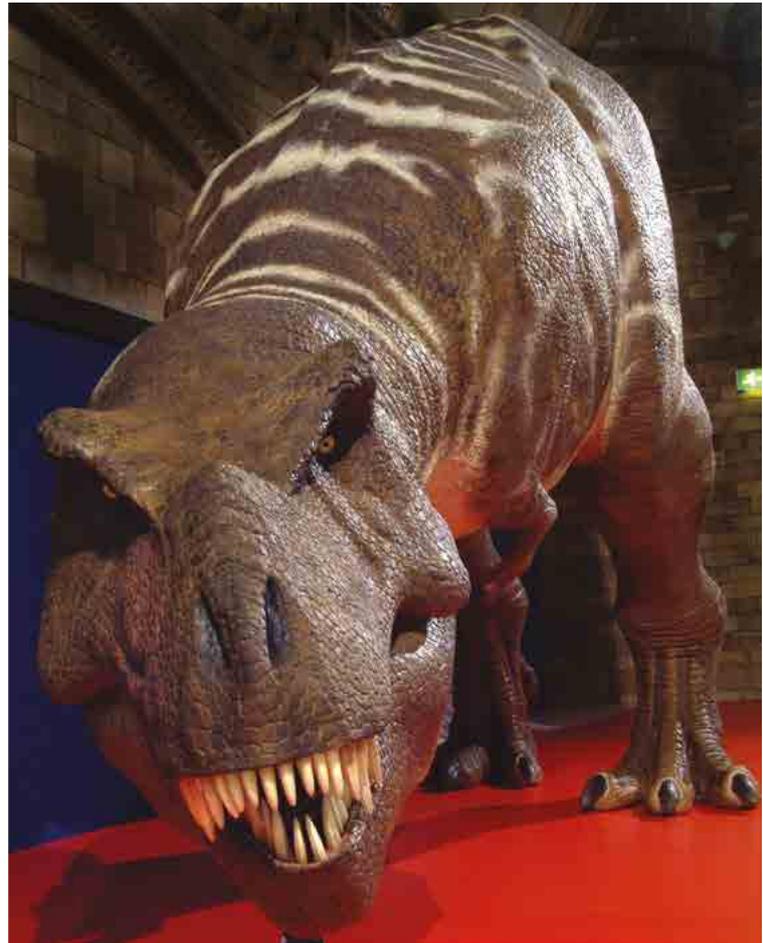
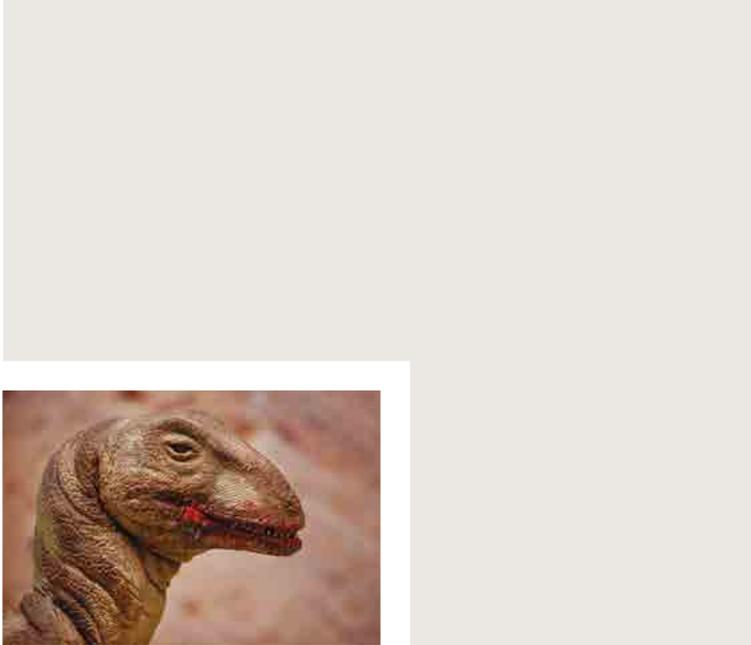
The *Saurornitholestes* show many features typical of predatory dinosaurs. They were small, agile and hunted in packs. Does *T. rex* fit this model?



### Life-size *T. rex*

This giant adult *T. rex* model is more than 12m/39.4ft long, 2.2m/7.2ft wide and 5m/16.4ft tall. It strikes a very intimidating pose, mimicking the one from the *T. rex* skeleton seen elsewhere in the exhibition.

With jaws that, if alive today, could crush you in a single bite, did *T. rex* snap at live prey or crunch on dead bones?



### Two animatronic *Deinonychus* and a *Tenontosaurus* model

A harmless adult full-size herbivore (*Tenontosaurus*) has just been attacked and killed, and is being devoured by two small, agile, full-size *Deinonychus*. Compare *Deinonychus* with *T. rex*. Could *T. rex* have been an agile, acrobatic predator? Might it have been a pack hunter like *Deinonychus*?



### Two *Dromaeosaurus* and one hadrosaur nest

A gentle plant-eating hadrosaur mother stands helplessly by as two animatronic *Dromaeosaurus* approach and attack her nest of young hatchlings. Both *Dromaeosaurus* and *Deinonychus* were savage hunters. *Dromaeosaurus* was also an opportunistic hunter, and baby dinosaurs, such as hadrosaur babies, were easy prey. Could *T. rex* have survived on dinosaur hatchlings?



**Film (audio visual)**

A four-minute edit from Discovery Channel's Valley of the T. Rex shows the world-renowned palaeontologist Jack Horner and his team collecting *T. rex* fossils in the field.

**Scavenging *T. rex* with *Triceratops* carcass**

This model of a three-quarter-size animatronic *T. rex* portrays this dinosaur as a red-faced scavenger, ravaging a slain *Triceratops*. Is this the true face of *T. rex*?

**Predatory *T. rex* with ankylosaur**

A more familiar picture: a three-quarter-size predatory *T. rex* is attacking an animatronic ankylosaur. Are you convinced the *T. rex* was a predator? As an active hunter that catches and kills animals for food, *T. rex* would also need to:

- actively chase and catch them
- subdue them
- kill them
- eat them

Is this the true picture of the *T. rex*?



# Specifications

## We provide

- nine animatronic models
- seven static models
- hands-on replicas and video footage
- production of subtitles for Valley of the T. Rex video and supply of projector
- text for translation and production of text panels and of Valley of the T. Rex video
- marketing toolkit
- exhibition soundtrack CD
- installation and dismantling of animatronic models
- technical support services
- instructions for day-to-day supervision
- some exhibition lighting

## Average installation/dismantling period

- seven to nine days

## Minimum hire period

- three months

## Venue requirements

- indoor display area 500sqm/5,000sqft
- environmentally controlled conditions
- scenery, backdrops, lights and barriers
- minimum doorway access: height 2.5m/8.2ft and width 2.2m/7.2ft
- minimum 4m/13.1ft gallery ceiling height
- 5.5m/18ft area height required for the assembly of the life-size static *T. rex*
- transportation of exhibition
- storage facilities for transport cases
- translation of text and production of text panels
- translation of subtitles for video footage
- air compressor and pipework
- skilled installation and dismantling support staff
- (single-phase) electrical supply
- equipment required for access, installation and dismantling
- staffing during exhibition hours
- promotion and publicity
- insurance (transit and public liability)

# Press release

## T. rex: The Killer Question

Exhibition open to the public:  
1 August 2003 – 3 May 2004

Media preview: 31 July 2003 10.30–13.00

Media tour with Dr Jack Horner  
(direct from US) and Dr Angela Milner:  
31 July 2003, 11.30

With jaws that could crush a car in a single crunch, a mouth so wide it could swallow a human whole and the strongest teeth of any dinosaur, *Tyrannosaurus rex*, the tyrant lizard king, was ferocious and powerful. But was *T. rex* the king of the killers, as commonly believed?

Although never cute or cuddly, Hollywood's favourite ancient reptile may not deserve its reputation. New scientific evidence pieced together by palaeontologist Jack Horner, of *Jurassic Park* fame, reinforces the idea that *T. rex* was not the fearsome hunter of legend, but a scavenger that used its strength – and stench – to claim the kills of other dinosaurs.

UK dinosaur fans will, for the first time, have the chance to consider the evidence for themselves at the Natural History Museum's new special exhibition *T. rex: The Killer Question*, opening 1 August 2003. With four massive *T. rex* models all in one room, London's big summer exhibition will state the case for both the predator and scavenger theories.

A scavenging *T. rex* would have looked, as well as behaved, very different from a predatory one. *T. rex: The Killer Question* will show the difference using the world's first life-like animatronic of *T. rex* as a red-faced scavenger seen ravaging a slain *Triceratops*. Set against the familiar fearsome face of a full-size roaring predatory *T. rex* attacking an animatronic ankylosaur, the new scavenging *T. rex* will shatter any existing perceptions.

The awesome size and presence of *T. rex* is sure to bring visitors to a halt. The towering life-size *T. rex* skeleton and full-size adult model will ensure everyone agrees, whichever *T. rex* lifestyle theory is correct, that a head-to-head with *T. rex* would have been a terrifying experience for any animal.

Other highlights of the exhibition experience include footage from a real-life *T. rex* dig conducted by Jack Horner in Hell Creek, Montana, the world's most fertile area for *T. rex* fossils.

The scientific image of *T. rex* has continued to evolve ever since the first *T. rex* skeleton was found by Barnum Brown in 1902 – simply because fossil evidence can only tell us so much,' said Dr Angela Milner, Associate Keeper of Palaeontology at the Natural History Museum. 'While we now know much more about how *T. rex* would have looked and moved, *T. rex*'s behaviour is still largely a mystery. Continuous questioning is the essence of science and it's through this process that we may learn more about *T. rex*.'

Jack Horner holds a stronger viewpoint. 'Big, nasty and stinky – that's my idea of *T. rex*. I don't believe there is any evidence for *T. rex* being a predator at all. With what we know, the best we can say is that *T. rex* was 100 per cent scavenger.'

And what will the public think? Visitors to *T. rex: The Killer Question* will be asked to join the dino debate, which is still being argued among the world's top scientists.

## Notes for editors

Dr Jack Horner is Curator of Palaeontology at the Museum of the Rockies, Montana, USA. He was the inspiration behind the character of Alan Grant in the film *Jurassic Park* and was the technical advisor to Steven Spielberg for *Jurassic Park* and its sequel, *The Lost World*. Find more on dinosaurs at the Natural History Museum's Dino Directory:  
[www.nhm.ac.uk/dinodirectory](http://www.nhm.ac.uk/dinodirectory).

The Natural History Museum is home to one of the world's most important dinosaur collections. The collection contains historic specimens of fundamental importance, such as the type material of two out of the three original dinosaurs recognised by Sir Richard Owen (*Iguanodon* and *Hylaeosaurus* – the third, *Megalosaurus*, is at Oxford University), the Museum's first Director and the originator of the term dinosaur.

*T. rex: The Killer Question* has been designed and created by the Natural History Museum and will travel worldwide after its debut season at the Museum.

# Visitor evaluation summary

*T. rex: The Killer Question* was shown at the Natural History Museum, London, for a nine-month period from August 2003. The exhibition performed exceptionally well, despite the recent introduction of separate admission charging. The total visitor numbers came to 30 per cent over projection, resulting in a 60 per cent increase in expected gross income.

## Visitor analysis

The following statistics are based on an analysis of self-completion questionnaires throughout the exhibition period. The findings are for information only and should be taken in the context of the Natural History Museum, sited in London.

It is hoped that this information will be a useful reference point for institutions interested in hosting the exhibition.

## Visitor profile

### Age

<16	17-24	25-34	35-44	45-59	60+
44%	12%	14%	18%	10%	2%

### Gender

Female	Male
50%	50%

## Visitor satisfaction

- overall, visitors were generally happy with the exhibition, with 94% of people stating they would recommend it to a friend and 70% of people strongly or slightly agreeing with the statement that the exhibition was excellent
- 82% of people thought the exhibition was good value for money, with 36% strongly agreeing with this statement
- visitors found the exhibition both more exciting and entertaining than they expected, with 78% strongly or slightly agreeing with both of these statements
- interestingly, 78% of visitors stated they felt they had learnt something new about *T. rex* by visiting the exhibition, and this particular statement had an overall mean of 1.3, the highest of all the mean scores in the visitor satisfaction statements
- 47% of visitors felt the exhibition appealed to a slightly older audience than expected

# Merchandise and publications



Lunch bag



Dinosaur models

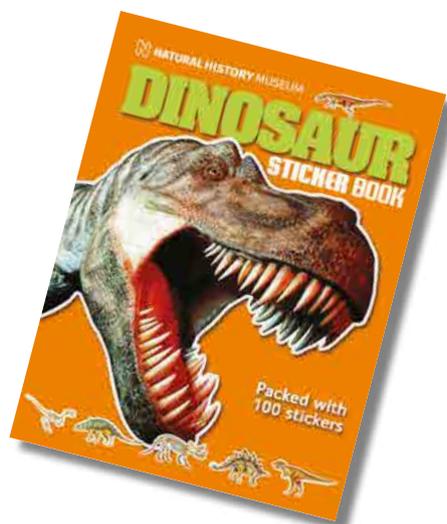


Soft toys



Guess Who? game

The Natural History Museum offers a wide range of dinosaur products. Please contact us for further details.



## Dinosaur Sticker Book

Get children drawing, matching shapes and learning how to say some really big words with this colourful sticker book. Packed with 100 re-useable stickers, bite-size facts and fun learning pages, this is the perfect introduction to these incredible creatures. Meet lots of dinosaurs, big and small, fierce and gentle. Unearth fossil skeletons and help a *T. rex* find its dinner, before inventing a new dinosaur unknown to science.

ISBN: 978 0 565 09221 4

£3.99

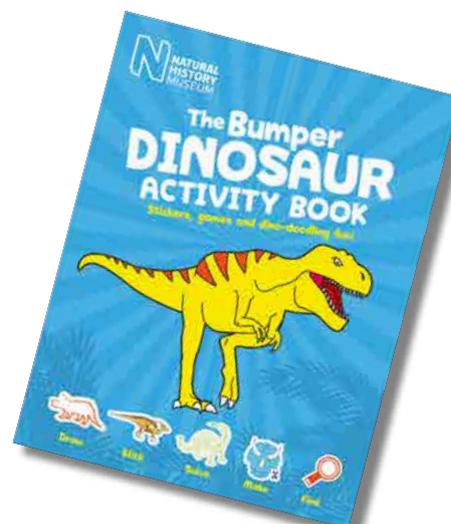
Paperback

Ideal for three to six year olds

Size: 280 x 216mm / 8½ x 11in

Extent: 8pp, plus 6pp of pull-out stickers  
four to six year olds

Museum bestseller – over 9,000 copies sold in 2010



## Bumper Dinosaur Activity Book

Over 50 fantastic dinosaur activities featuring *T. rex*, *Stegosaurus*, *Diplodocus* and many more

Packed with exciting games and bite-size facts that make learning fun.

Create your own colourful dinosaurs and find out lots of amazing facts about these fantastic creatures with the Natural History Museum's new book for young dinosaur enthusiasts.

ISBN: 978 0 565 09358 7

Format: Paperback

Price: £10

Size: 280 x 216mm / 11 x 8½in

Extent: 96pp

Ideal for 8+