

Egg-stealing Dinosaurs from the Cretaceous of Alberta.

PHILIP J. CURRIE (Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, Drumheller, Alberta) and DALE A. RUSSELL (National Museum of Canada, Ottawa).

Articulated skeletal material of small, edentulous theropods, formerly classified with the Ornithomimidae but more recently separated into a distinct infraorder (Oviraptorosauria), are known from aeolian sediments of late Cretaceous age in central Asia. Because of the small size and fragility of their skeletons, articulated specimens of oviraptorosaurs are seldom found in fluvial strata in North America. In 1979, a field party from the Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology collected a partial skeleton of an oviraptorosaur in Dinosaur Provincial Park (Campanian, Alberta). Included were parts of the axial skeleton, manus, pelvis and hind limb, which were sufficient to demonstrate that the fragmentary type specimens of the generic species of Chiostenotes and Macrophalangia pertain to the same genus. Study of other materials available from the Park suggests that at least two species were present, as is the case for Caenagnathus, another nominal genus of oviraptorosaur from the Park. Should all of the material assigned to these taxa belong to a single genus, the oldest name available would be Chiostenotes. Characteristics in the postcranial material are suggestive of a relationship both to Oviraptor, from Mongolia, and to Microvenator from the Cloverly Formation (Aptian-Albian) in the United States. If Microvenator is, as seems likely, an oviraptorosaur, it constitutes the oldest known record of this group of dinosaurs.

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