

DAVID AARON



Nanosaurus Skeleton

Late Jurassic, circa 150 million years old

USA

Fossilised Bone

H: 64 x W: 25 x L: 182 cm

The Nanosaurus ('small or dwarf lizard') is a genus of dinosaur that lived about 155 to 148 million years ago. The type was described and named by Othniel Charles Marsh (October 29, 1831 – March 18, 1899), an American professor of Palaeontology at Yale College and President of the National Academy of Sciences, in 1877 – originally called Othnielia or Othenielosaurus. He was one of the preeminent scientists in the field of palaeontology. Among his legacies is the discovery or description of dozens of new species and theories on the origins of birds. In 2018, Othnielia, Othnielosaurus, and Drinker were made synonymous with Nanosaurus.

The Nanosaurus was once considered to be the smallest dinosaur ever to exist, growing to no larger than approximately 180 cm in length; it had short arms, slender legs and an exceptionally long tail which made up most of its size. Social, speedy, and possibly even feathered, the herbivore Nanosaurus was the friendly 'Roadrunner' of its time. Thriving on its wits at the feet of Jurassic giants like T Rex and Diplodocus.

Less than ten viable fossil specimens associated with Nanosaurus have been unearthed since the first one was discovered in 1877, and all Nanosaurus specimens have been discovered in the Late Jurassic Morrison Formation in the western United States. The Morrison is by far the most famous and productive dinosaurbearing formation in North America and represents one of the best terrestrial Mesozoic formations in the world.

Named after the town of Morrison, Colorado, the Morrison Formation is centred in Colorado and Wyoming, but exposures are found across several other states, including Utah, Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Arizona, New Mexico and Kansas.

