

## **How the dinosaurs became extinct**

Long before today, dinosaurs dominated Planet Earth. What happened to them? Why are they not here now? Many people and scientists have different theories on this matter, which will be explored below.

The most common and widely known theories are: the impact of an asteroid or comet on the earth, competition from other mammals, several volcanic eruptions, a disease caused by the dinosaurs migrating to new continents, inability to survive in the ice age and gradual extinction.

### **Theory of an Asteroid Impact**

The most publicised theory was one about an asteroid or comet on Earth at Chicxulub in the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico that may have caused dinosaurs' extinction. The impact could have caused major damage, including a vast cloud of dust spreading iridium across the land. Massive changes in the climate would be caused by this, destroying plant life. Herbivorous dinosaurs might have died of hunger and the carnivorous dinosaurs died as there was no meat (herbivores) to eat. This theory was discovered when a layer of rock, covered in deadly iridium, dated back approximately to the time of the extinction of dinosaurs.

### **Unsupported Theories**

It was suggested by some scientists, that the dinosaurs' eggs were eaten and stolen by mammals; however, this theory is not supported as marine mammals were non-existent during the Cretaceous period.

Towards the end of the Cretaceous period was the shifting of continents. It is believed that dinosaurs were then able to migrate to new areas such as Asia and North America which caused the spread of a disease wiping the dinosaurs out. However, this theory does not explain the disappearance of other species at the time.

Another theory is the cold conditions of the ice ages that would make the dinosaurs become extinct due the fact that they were thought to be cold blooded. This was not supported as there is no evidence of an ice age occurring during the existence of dinosaurs.

### Other Possible Theories

It is said that severe volcanic eruptions in the Deccan Plateau in western India, 65 million years ago may have made the climate more difficult for dinosaurs to survive. Being starved of sunlight, due to the dust and debris created by the volcanic eruption preventing the sun's rays from coming to earth for a long period of time.

There is also the explanation that dinosaurs gradually became extinct at the end of the Cretaceous period.

### Conclusion

Despite all of the theories, scientists will continue to create more as they discover more fossils of the dinosaurs and learn more about Earth. It is yet to be discovered exactly what happened to the dinosaurs.