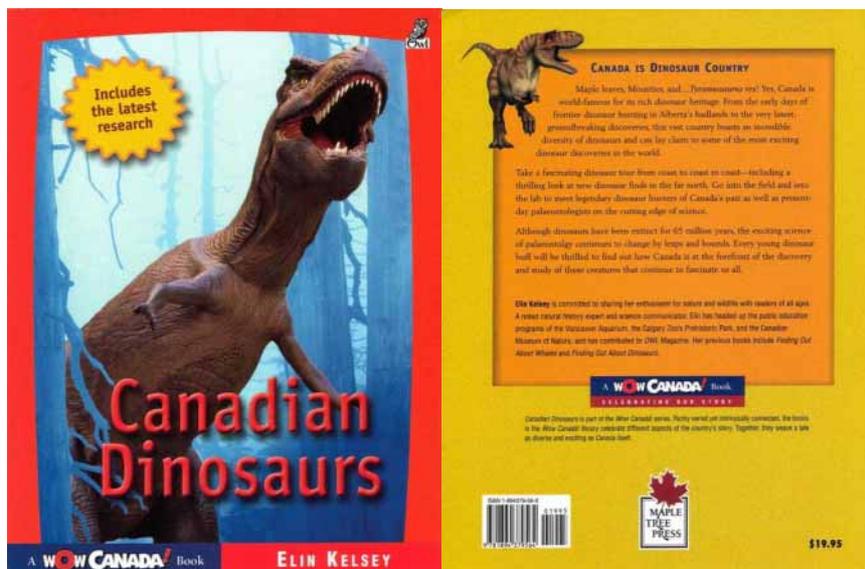


Kelsey, E. 2003. *Canadian dinosaurs.* – USA, Maple Tree Press

Book review by S.M. van Roode



This is the sort of book that, as a child, I would have loved to have. I would have had to be a Canadian child however, since this book deals solely with Canadian dinosaurs. In 96 pages, the book offers not only a catalogue of different dinosaurs that once lived in what is now Canada, but also tells the story of their discovery. In a lively manner, children are informed about the different aspects of dinosaur research. Comprehensible texts, lots of photographs and small sidesteps in separate textboxes provide insight in the way dinosaurs have been researched from the earliest discoveries to the latest excavations. I particularly like the ‘researcher profiles’ in which important scientists are introduced in just a few, but very to the point lines. Written with a child’s perspective in mind, the book presents dinosaur tracks discovered by children in British Columbia, shows photographs of children participating in excavations in Alberta’s Dinosaur Provincial Park and many more interesting facts.

Next, the book presents a catalogue of dinosaurs from coast to coast. They are orderly arranged in carnivores and herbivores. Nice detail: carnivore pages are marked with a red band and have red as main colour for captions accordingly and herbivore pages are green pages. Within these two groups they are arranged in subgroups such as theropods, sauropods etc. Not being a palaeontologist myself, I was surprised to learn that my all-time favourite prehistoric animal, the Archaeopteryx of which a lovely drawing can be found on a red-rimmed page, thus apparently was a carnivore! Of course, at the end of this section, the question ‘Where have all the dinosaurs gone?’ pops up. I was pleased to see that not just one answer was provided, consisting of the main theory of this moment, but that three possible explanations are presented. In this way, children can see at an early age that there is no such thing as THE answer, and that different possibilities have to be explored. This theme is carried on in the next section, ‘Into the future’. Here, it is explained that every new discovery may provide new insights and thus change existing views. From my point of view, it is important that children not only enjoy reading books like these, but also learn that science is always in motion, resulting in new views and new ideas. The book has many beautiful illustrations by different artists. The third section of the book also features one of these artists, explaining how to draw dinosaurs. At the end, we find an overview of dinosaurs per state, a ‘dinosaur timeline’, a glossary, and a list of institutions, including ones that allow children to assist in excavations.

In short, the book has a lot to offer. The author, Elin Kelsey, takes children seriously: the texts are comprehensible without being overly childish, a lot of different facts are presented in a concise, pleasant manner and the illustrations are carefully chosen and actually have a relationship with the text. It was a pleasure to read for this ‘grown-up’, and I trust that it will be fun for children as well!

Kelsey, E. 2003. *Canadian dinosaurs.* – USA, Maple Tree Press (distributed by Firefly Books). 96 pp. ISBN 1-894379-56-X. Price US\$ 19.95 (paperback).