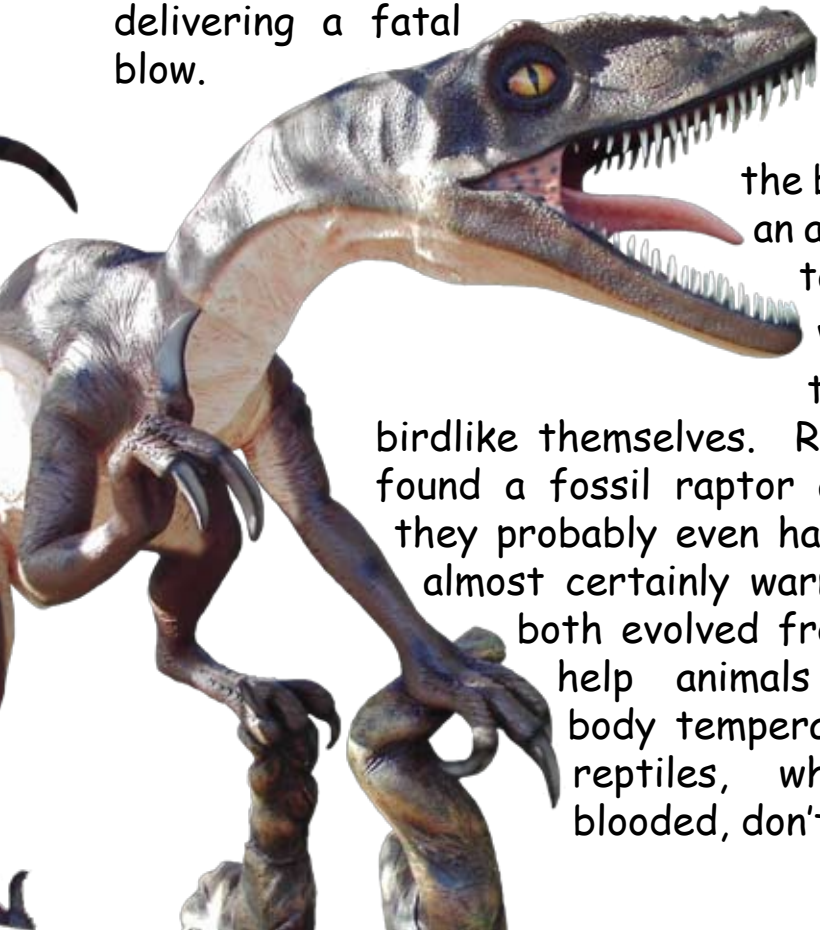


VELOCIRAPTOR

meaning 'swift seizer'

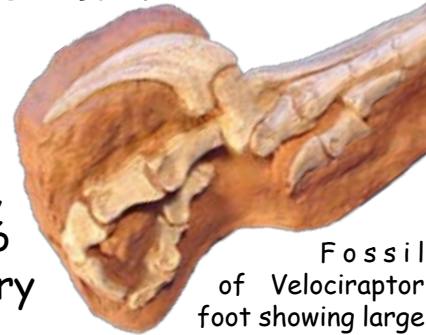
Velociraptor walked on two slender legs; it was certainly among the fastest of the dinosaurs, considering its long legs and light weight.

The second digit of the foot was highly modified and held retracted off of the ground. It bore a relatively large, sickle-shaped claw, which could be over 6.5 cm (2.6 in) long around its outer edge. It was most likely a predatory device used to tear into prey, possibly delivering a fatal blow.



The jaws were lined with 26-28 widely spaced teeth on each side, each more strongly serrated on the back edge than the front - possibly an adaptation that improved its ability to catch and hold fast-moving prey.

Velociraptors were closely related to the ancestors of birds, and very birdlike themselves. Recently palaeontologists in Mongolia found a fossil raptor arm with quill knobs attached, so they probably even had feathers. That means they were almost certainly warm-blooded, since feathers and fur both evolved from modified scales as insulation to help animals control their body temperature - ordinary reptiles, which are cold blooded, don't need to.



Fossil of Velociraptor foot showing large sickle-shaped claw.

FACTS & FIGURES

Diet	Carnivore
Average body length	Head to tail: Up to 2m
Average weight	Up to 20kg
Time on Earth	75-85 million years ago

Velociraptor may have been able to run up to roughly 40 mph (60 km/hr) for short bursts. It was also quite a proficient jumper!



The long hind legs in relation to the rest of it's body would likely have made for great speed.

International Union for Conservation of Nature RED LIST for the Velociraptor



THIS SPECIES HAS BEEN ASSESSED AS *EXTINCT* IUCN RED LIST