

Welcome!

Mississippi State University would like to celebrate the national fossil day with you! Welcome to the Dunn Seiler Museum here on campus, where you can see fossils collected from this area that are millions of years old!

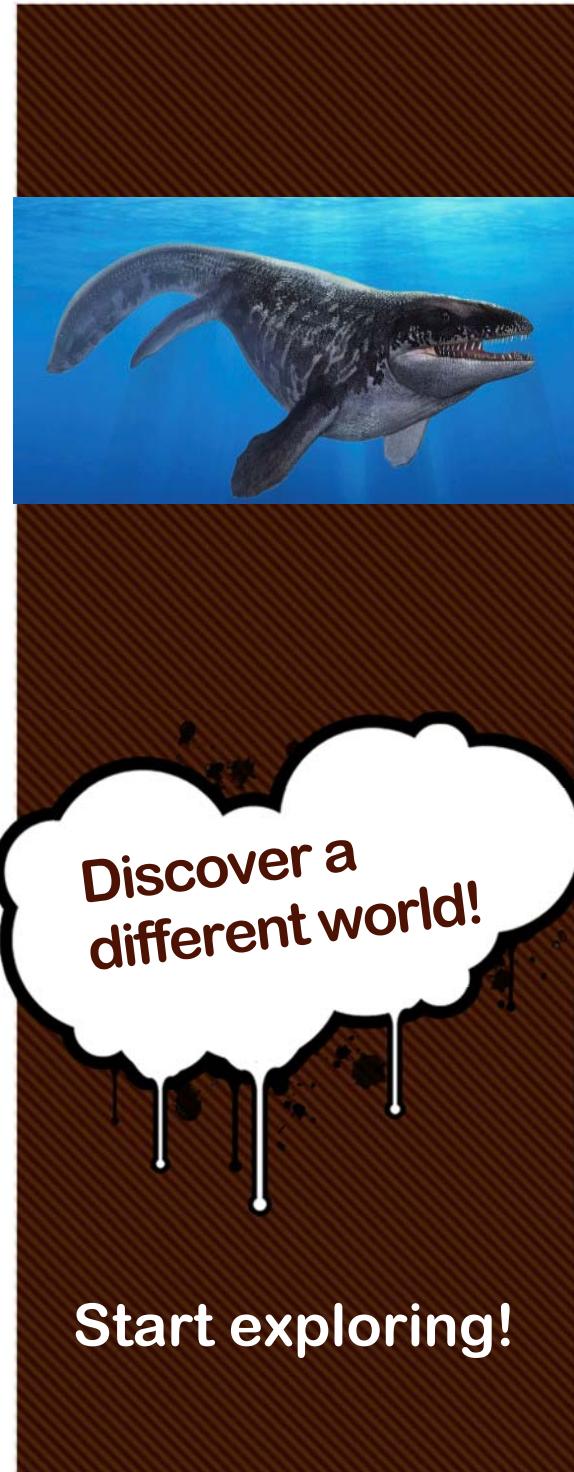
Did you know?

Did you know that Mississippi was once under water? One of the coolest fossils ever found was discovered right here at your doorstep, in the wonderful state of Mississippi. The Mosasaurs, a marine reptile that lived over 60 million years ago, once called parts of Mississippi its home. You can find a vertebra of this late giant here at the Dunn Seiler Museum. Take a look around!

How cool?

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Start exploring!

Fossils

Mississippi offers a great variety of fossils that help us understand the past



Gastropods

Gastropods are snail like creatures whose ancestors lived a very long time ago. The fossils that were found in many outcrops here in Mississippi are mostly marine, meaning they lived under water. They are usually quite well preserved and easy to identify.

Ammonites

Ammonites also have a coiled shell but unlike the gastropods, they floated in the water and were quite intelligent. You have probably seen a nautilid at the aquarium before. Nautilids come from the same family as ammonites and they look similar. Unlike their cousins, they survived the great extinctions and are fascinating creatures.



The Fossil Record

The fossil record is the collection and description of all the fossils that have been found in the world. It helps us understand how the earth was like in the past. But besides the fact that fossils are fascinating and ignite our imagination, they are also an important aid in the understanding of our environment.

Fossils show us in what environment the creature has lived in (e.g. marine) and therefore, how the environment was different from today.

They also help us in dating rock layers and rock types, which is important because it tells us how long ago they have lived and in some cases, why they have died.

Fossils are important for the oil industry as well, because Oil is formed by dead microorganisms. If you find fossilized microorganisms, it indicates that there is a good chance of finding oil as well.