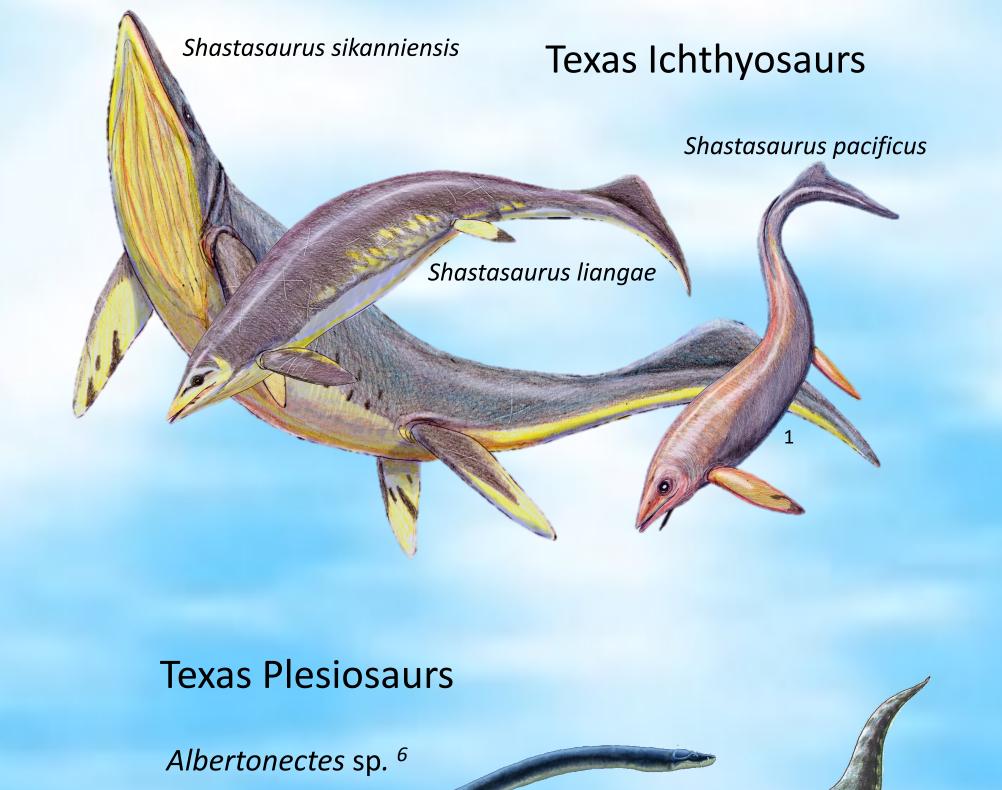
# TEXAS SEA MONSTERS

## \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* Paleontological Society of Austin \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

The Mesozoic Era was the Age of Reptiles. It includes the Triassic, the Jurassic and the Cretaceous periods. Dinosaurs first appeared during the Triassic and were the dominant animals on land for 135 million years. In parallel, reptiles evolved that ruled the oceans. These were not dinosaurs, but separate kinds of marine vertebrates (animals with backbones). Many lived in the ocean covering what is now Texas. The remains of all of these major families have been found here, including ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs (in two varieties - longnecked and short-necked), and mosasaurs. The most frequently encountered fossils are those of the mosasuars of the mid and late Cretaceous, inhabitants of the Western Interior Seaway. All of these reptiles breathed air and bore live young.



#### **Texas** Mosasaurs

Dallasaurus<sup>2</sup>

Platecarpus<sup>4</sup>

Clidastes <sup>3</sup>



Kronosaurus sp.<sup>7</sup>



#### Elasmosaurus sp.<sup>8</sup>

#### Tylosaurus <sup>5</sup>

# MASS EXTINCTION

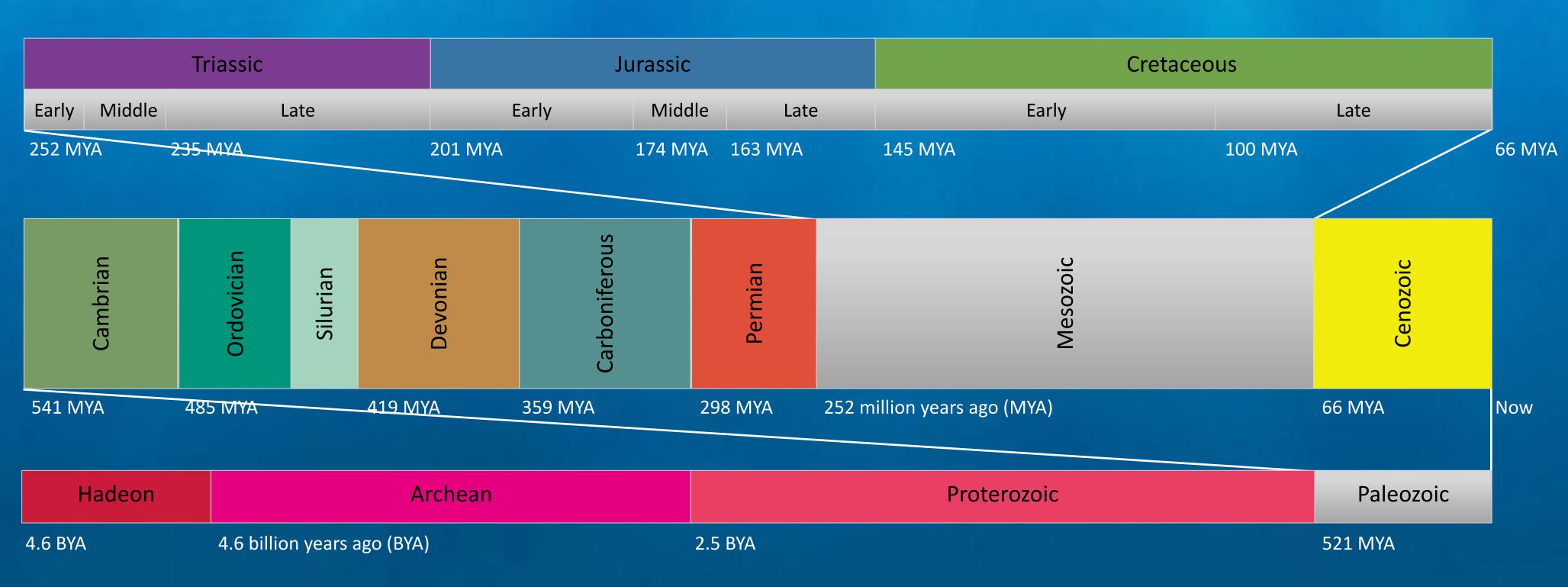
The Age of Reptiles opened with a massextinction at the end of the Permian, 252 MYA (million years ago). This was the most severe such event in Earth's history and marks the beginning of the Mesozoic era. Up to 96% of all marine species and 70% of terrestrial vertebrate species becoming Similarly, the Age of Reptiles closed in a geological moment 66 million years ago with an event that killed off almost all the dinosaurs and some 70 percent of all other species living on Earth.



### PLESIOSAURS IN SHOAL CREEK!

The fossilized skeleton of a 14 to 18 foot long Cretaceous plesiosaur (genus *Polytychodon*) was discovered in the bed of Shoal Creek in January, 1990. The fossil was found by Dr. Bob McDonald, a local dentist, amateur paleontologist and member of the Paleontological Society of Austin.

It took several weeks for the fossil to be properly excavated by faculty and students from ACC and the University of Texas. The specimen is fairly complete (except for the head) and dates to roughly 90 million years ago. It is now on display in the Texas Science & Natural History Museum.



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