

MEGALOSAURUS *bucklandii*

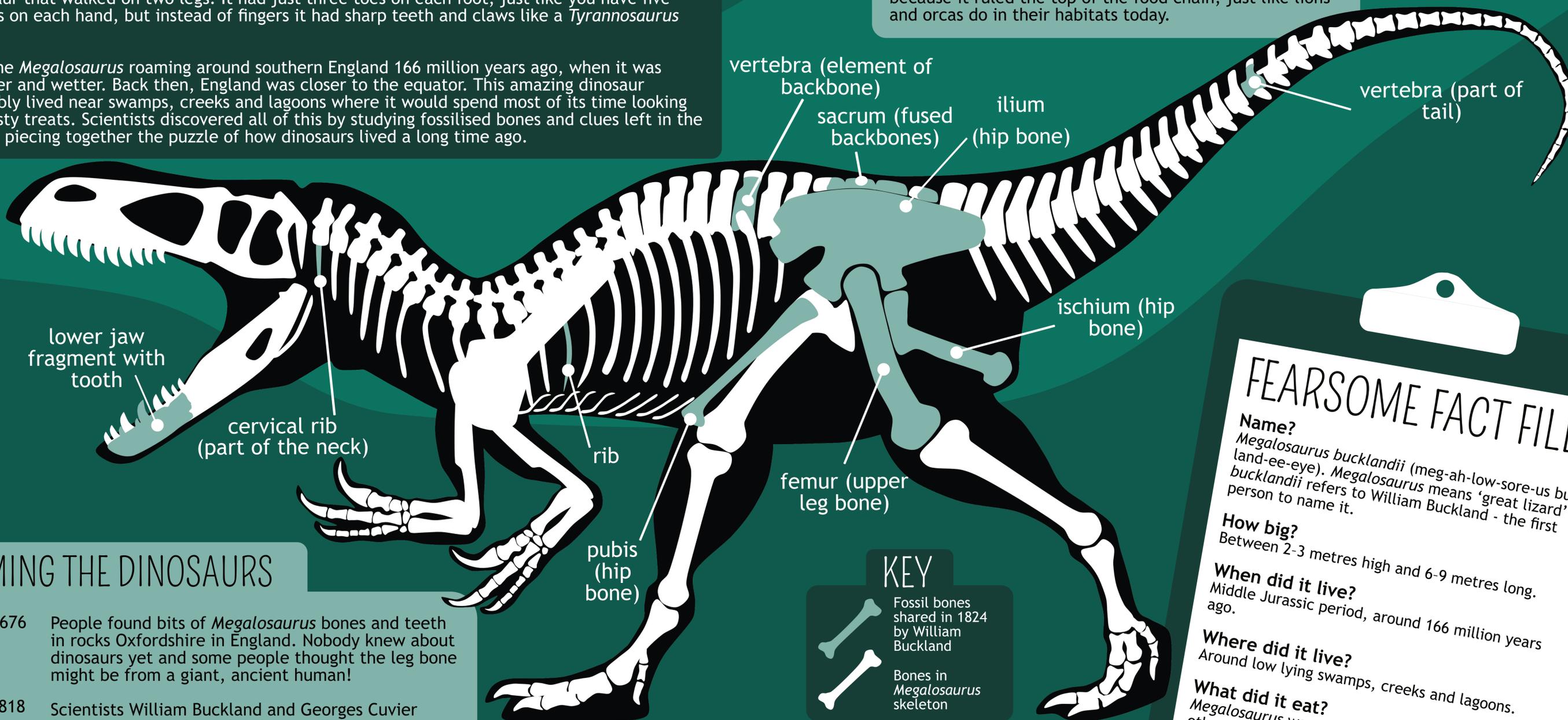
MEGA MEAT-EATER!

The *Megalosaurus* was a fierce meat-eater with teeth as sharp as a pointy knife, strong enough to pierce and rip apart even big plant-eating dinosaurs like *Stegosaurus*!

If *Megalosaurus* lost or broke a tooth during dinner, it could grow new ones! Scientists discovered this by finding jaw bones with different layers of teeth - some big and fully grown, and others smaller and still growing below. Nothing dared to mess with the *Megalosaurus* because it ruled the top of the food chain, just like lions and orcas do in their habitats today.

Megalosaurus bucklandii was a special kind of dinosaur called a theropod-a flesh-eating dinosaur that walked on two legs. It had just three toes on each foot, just like you have five fingers on each hand, but instead of fingers it had sharp teeth and claws like a *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

Imagine *Megalosaurus* roaming around southern England 166 million years ago, when it was warmer and wetter. Back then, England was closer to the equator. This amazing dinosaur probably lived near swamps, creeks and lagoons where it would spend most of its time looking for tasty treats. Scientists discovered all of this by studying fossilised bones and clues left in the rocks, piecing together the puzzle of how dinosaurs lived a long time ago.



NAMING THE DINOSAURS

- 1676 People found bits of *Megalosaurus* bones and teeth in rocks Oxfordshire in England. Nobody knew about dinosaurs yet and some people thought the leg bone might be from a giant, ancient human!
- 1818 Scientists William Buckland and Georges Cuvier figured out that these fossils actually came from a big lizard-like animal which they named '*Megalosaurus*', meaning 'great lizard'.
- 1824 The name became official in 1824, when Buckland announced it a meeting of The Geological Society.
- 1842 Richard Owen, a biologist, noticed that *Megalosaurus* and two other creatures had special features not seen in other animals. So, he made up a new scientific group called 'Dinosauria' or 'dinosaurs'-which means 'terrible lizards'.

KEY

-  Fossil bones shared in 1824 by William Buckland
-  Bones in *Megalosaurus* skeleton

FEARSOME FACT FILE

Name?
Megalosaurus bucklandii (meg-ah-low-sore-us buck-land-ee-eye). *Megalosaurus* means 'great lizard' and *bucklandii* refers to William Buckland - the first person to name it.

How big?
 Between 2-3 metres high and 6-9 metres long.

When did it live?
 Middle Jurassic period, around 166 million years ago.

Where did it live?
 Around low lying swamps, creeks and lagoons.

What did it eat?
Megalosaurus was a carnivore and probably ate other dinosaurs.

Did it have feathers?
 Maybe! Some dinosaur fossils similar to *Megalosaurus* have been found with feathers so it's thought that *Megalosaurus* probably would have been covered with thin, coarse feathers.



What Richard Owen thought *Megalosaurus* might have looked like