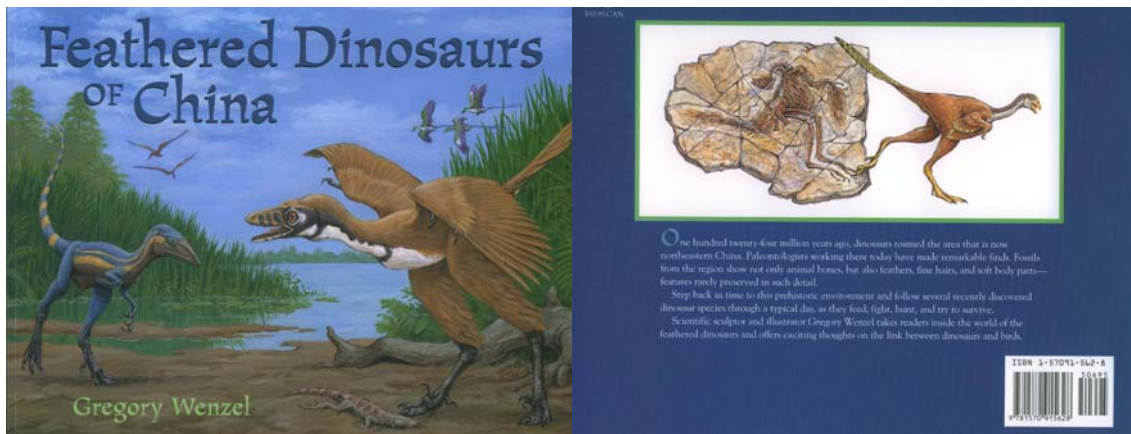


Wenzel, G. 2004. Feathered dinosaurs of China. – Watertown, Charlesbridge Publishing

Book review by C. van Kooten



“Let’s step back 124 million years. The scene looks nothing like present-day...” This is how Gregory Wenzel’s story on the feathered dinosaurs of China begins. His book takes us on a journey to an early Cretaceous lakebed, in a part of China now called Liaoning Province. Readers meet the numerous inhabitants of the lakebed; feathered and non-feathered. A few examples are the largest feathered dinosaur ever, *Beipiaosaurus*, a plant eater with fearsome claws; the lizard-like aquatic predator *Hyphalosaurus*, *Sinosauropteryx* with its 64 vertebrae long tail and *Jinzhouosaurus*, one of the largest of the Liaoning dinosaurs. The story describes predator/prey relationships and provides information on the appearance and way of life of the different dinosaurs. In the beginning and at the end of the book, Wenzel describes how the dinosaurs become fossilised. He also provides evidence that modern birds are the descendents of dinosaurs and that the feathered fossils of China represent an important transition between the two.

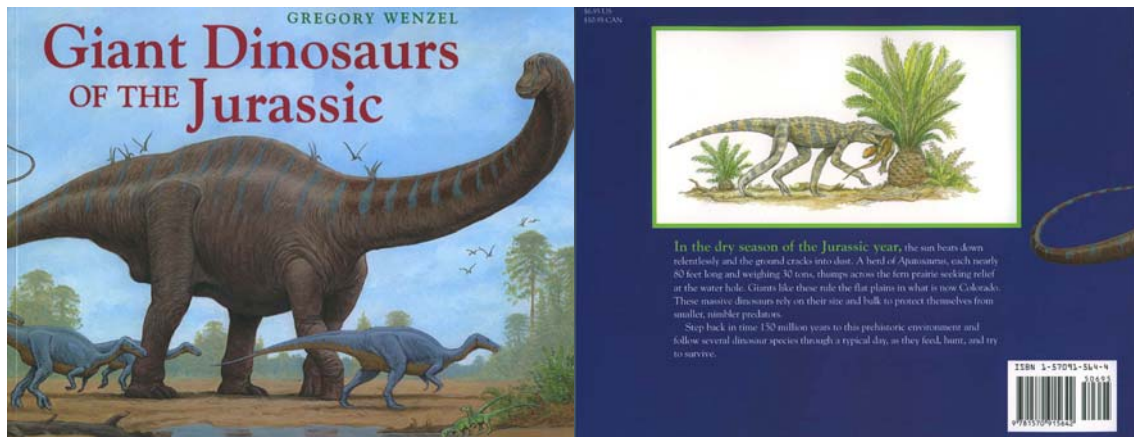
Gregory Wenzel is a trained illustrator, specialised in natural science subjects. His acrylic illustrations of dinosaurs and the world surrounding the lakebed are beautiful and very realistic, especially for a children’s book. The text itself can, at times, be somewhat difficult, especially for younger children. The vast amount of Latin names and species information provided, appear squashed in, making the text more difficult than it has to be. As a result, the reader may become distracted from the plot of the story and therefore lose interest in the book. Another unfortunate aspect of this book is that the glossary, other than giving the pronunciation of names, provides no further information on the dinosaurs discussed in the story. A small drawing of each dinosaur, along with its name and/or a few features of the dinosaur, would have helped make the glossary more useful, thereby making the book more accessible and simpler to understand. However, that the pronunciation of the Latin names is given is very handy. The information provided by the book, on the dinosaurs and their way of life, is up to date and certainly has educational value. His book offers you good value for money.

Overall, I think that, ‘dinosaur enthusiastic’ children of about twelve years and older, along with grown-ups interested in dinosaur, will enjoy ‘Feathered dinosaur of China’. And “As the day ends, we leave Liaoning”.

Wenzel, G. 2004. Feathered dinosaurs of China. – Watertown, Charlesbridge Publishing. 32 pp. ISBN 1 57091 562 8. Price \$6.95 (paperback), \$16.95 (hardcover).

Wenzel, G. 2004. *Giant dinosaurs of the Jurassic*. – Watertown, Charlesbridge Publishing

Book review by C. van Kooten



“If we could stand in Colorado and run time backward 150 million years, we would see the Rocky Mountains flatten and then disappear...” This time Wenzel takes us to a dried-up river in Colorado during the late Jurassic period. Before he begins his story, he gives a short introduction on the Morrison formation and the fossils found there. He explains that the layers of rock of the late Jurassic period in North America are called the Morrison Formation and that these layers are very rich in dinosaur bones. We then go back 150 million years in time. We meet with the giant plant eaters *Camarasaurus*, *Brachiosaurus*, *Apatosaurus*, *Barosaurus* and *Diplodocus*, along with the big meat eaters *Ceratosaurus* and *Allosaurus*, that all once walked the earth. However, before we meet any such giants, the first few pages of the story describe the life’s of smaller animals and dinosaurs, such as turtles, flying *Comodactylus*, *Othielia* and the very small mammal *Docodont*. The book also provides information on predator/prey interactions, and tells the reader about the appearance and way of life of different dinosaurs, similar in manner to Wenzel’s other book ‘Feathered dinosaurs of China’. At the end, Wenzel describes how the remains of the giant dinosaurs turn into fossils. Furthermore, he describes how palaeontological research is still carried out in the in the Morrison quarries today.

The illustrations again are realistic and fascinating; the smaller vignettes highlighting a particular action are especially nice. The end of the story is, to my opinion, somewhat abrupt. A newly discussed giant dinosaur, *Diplodocus*, appears to be squeezed into one of the last sentences.

Similarly to Wenzel’s other book ‘Feathered dinosaur of China’, a considerable amount of Latin names are given throughout this book, periodically making the text somewhat difficult to understand. But overall a nice book for dinosaur interested children and adults. “Who knows what extraordinary Jurassic giants they will find in the future?”

Wenzel, G. 2004. *Giant dinosaurs of the Jurassic*. – Watertown, Charlesbridge Publishing. 32 pp. ISBN 1 57091 564 4. Price \$6.95 (paperback), \$16.95 (hardcover).