



Was Tyrannosaurus Rex a predator or a scavenger?

There is much evidence to suggest that Tyrannosaurus rex was an active predator rather than a scavenger. The eye sockets of T. rex are angled forward and the top of the snout is quite narrow, so T. rex would have been able to focus both eyes on an object at the same time. This would have given T. rex good depth perception. Depth perception is important for a predator - But not terribly important for a scavenger. For instance, a T. rex that misjudged distance while fighting a Triceratops would

have ended up dead. If you're a scavenger, your meal isn't trying to run away or fight back.

Some authors have cited the high femur to tibia ratio as evidence that Tyrannosaurus wasn't fast enough to be an active predator, but this fails to take into account the very long metatarsals that effectively added a whole other limb segment to the Tyrannosaurus' hind leg. T. rex's most probable prey animal, the duckbill dinosaur Edmontosaurus, had proportionately much shorter metatarsals and would have been a slower runner.

There is also some good, hard 'smoking gun' evidence that T. rex was an active predator. An Edmontosaurus skeleton at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science has a bite taken out of the top of its tail that closely matches the size and shape of a Tyrannosaurus rex tooth row (although the rumor that T. rex tooth fragments were found embedded in the bone are unfounded.) Dr. Ken Carpenter found evidence that the bone had re-healed after the bite was taken, so the wound is the signature of an active predator and not just a scavenger that bit the Edmontosaurus after it had died of natural causes.

This is not to say that Tyrannosaurus never scavenged. Many modern predators – lions, for example – will eat a dead animal if they happen to find one. But the evidence clearly shows that Tyrannosaurus also took down live prey.

