Biography - Matthew McCurry

Matthew McCurry is Curator of Palaeontology within the Australian Museum Research Institute and has a joint appointment as a lecturer in the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Science at The University of New South Wales.

Matthew holds a Bachelor of Science Degree with honours from The University of Newcastle and a PhD from The Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology, Monash University.

He was a Peter Buck Fellow in the Department of Paleobiology at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of Natural History where he worked on several research projects under the supervision of Dr Nicholas Pyenson. Before moving to Sydney Matthew was employed as an ARC Linkage Postdoctoral Fellow at Monash University and Museums Victoria. During this fellowship he excavated fossil whales from the Surf Coast of Victoria and also worked on fossils already housed in the Museum Victoria collections.

Matthew’s research interests are in Vertebrate Palaeontology and functional morphology. His work focuses on understanding the behavior and ecology of extinct species. This work includes traditional approaches such as excavation of fossil sites and description of species together with cutting edge analyses using CT scanning and biomechanical modelling.

These modern techniques show how technological advances are allowing paleontologists to reveal more and more information about the lives of extinct creatures.

Matthew has worked on a wide range of species of mammal and reptile including primates, lizards, ichthyosaurs, crocodiles and whales. He has active collaborations with staff from Museums Victoria (AU), The University of Newcastle (AU), Monash University (AU), The Smithsonian Institution (USA), The Natural History Museum (UK), Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (BE).

Matthew’s current research projects include the description of a new species of fossil whale, analyses of sensory evolution using CT scanning, analysis of locomotion in fossil primates and work that aims to better understanding the process of convergent evolution.

Matthew has long had a passion for paleontology, and cites visiting The Australian Museum as a child as one of the key factors that sparked this interest.