

Dinosaur Planet BRONCOSAURUS REX

By Joseph Goodman



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***Cretasus Worldbook, spring 2002
Raptor Sourcebook, summer 2002***

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Published by
Goodman Games
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Dedicated to April.

Chapter I: The World of Broncosaurus Rex

In *Dinosaur Planet: Broncosaurus Rex*, dinosaurs have been discovered on the planet Cretasus. It is the year 2202, and you are an adventurer there. The two major factions in human politics – the Federal Union of Planets and the Confederate States of America – are rushing to colonize the planet, and your character joins in.

You could be a bronco rider, riding the dinosaurs for adventure and profit. Perhaps you're a soldier: a Union ironclad pilot, a Federal sheriff or a rebel blockade runner. You could be a street fighter in search of fortune or a homeworld dissident fighting for freedom. You could be one of the legendary wild ones, fearsome humans who leave human company to live with the dinosaurs. You could be a Union machinist, always equipped with the latest technology. You could be an idealistic infantryman, a freelance dino hunter, a warp pirate, a Union turncoat, an outer ranges explorer, a dino rustler or an alien hunter. The world of *Broncosaurus Rex* is in your hands!

Cretasus: Dinosaur Planet

The planet Cretasus lies at the far edges of known space, in a desolate region called the outer reaches. A large world in a lonely, sparsely-settled system, Cretasus is strangely earthlike. Its atmosphere, climate and seasons all resemble those on Earth. Strangest of all, its flora and fauna are like Earth's – but not like the Earth of today. Cretasus is home to plants and animals that have not roamed our planet for millions of years. Cretasus is home to dinosaurs.

Since the discovery of this fact, humans have flocked to Cretasus. Adventurers come for wealth and glory, ranchers come for the dinosaurs, farmers come for the fertile soil, frontiersmen come for a new life, and dino hunters come for the challenge. Industrialists come for the mineral wealth, the military comes for exploration, the Free Fleet traders come to meet growing demand, and the wild ones come to join the dinosaurs. It seems that everyone has come – but no one yet governs.

Cretasus is far outside established political borders. Humanity's two largest factions – the Federal Union of Planets and the Confederate States of America – struggle for possession. Cretasus' Earth-like environment and abundance of dinosaurs have brought it to the forefront of galactic politics. Although the Union and Confederacy ceased open warfare long ago, they have never ended hostilities. Now the battle for Cretasus threatens to re-open a centuries-old conflict.

The Confederate States of America, still titled as such though it now occupies hundreds of planets throughout the universe, views Cretasus as a saving grace. Since being forced off Earth by the Union, the Confederacy has been scattered across the galaxy. Cretasus' fertile soil, plentiful beasts of burden and rich, unspoiled wilderness could provide a new home base.

The Federal Union of Planets, the most technologically advanced human nation, is intent on exploiting Cretasus' natural resources. The planet's natural wealth – measured in oil, ore and timber – is incalculable. It could supply Union industrial operations for years to come.

Cretasus is a gold mine waiting to be claimed. But the question remains: Who will claim it?

The Planet

Cretasus is a Jupiter-sized planet with Earth-like terrain. Its air is breathable by humans, and many of its native plants can be eaten safely. The densely forested equatorial belt is a single, unbroken land mass, which fractures into thousands of islands as it approaches the poles. Overlaid across the land are enormous mountain ranges that divide the surface into twenty great valleys.

Every terrain on Earth is found on Cretasus, as well as some that are unique, such as the thousand-foot-tall spider web forests of the equatorial regions or the glacial "mushrooms" formed by rivers of molten lava that flow under the polar wastelands.

Cretasus has two moons, as well as thousands of asteroids in a low-lying orbit. Most of the asteroids are less than a football field in length and do nothing but obstruct the view. A few are larger, however, and have provided anchors for satellites, landing platforms and orbital weapons.

The sheer size of Cretasus has prevented any comprehensive survey of its life forms. Though the Confederacy knows much more of its taxonomy than the Union, they still have catalogued less than 1 percent of the planet's species.

In the regions where they have settled, the Confederate settlers have identified hundreds of varieties of dinosaurs virtually identical to those once found on Earth. They also have found unique endemic species, including giant insects, highly evolved land-dwelling jellyfish and bipedal pre-sentient reptilians.

Prehistoric mammals have been sighted in neighboring regions, engendering theories that the planet's massive surface area has created numerous micro-climates separated by mountains or other impassable terrain. Some micro-climates have remained





“frozen” in evolutionary time or have evolved along unusual lines, while others have evolved more normally. The result is widely different ecological results in close proximity to each other.

The Twenty Valleys

By all biological considerations, Cretasus is an anomaly. Its lifeforms have followed both parallel and divergent evolutionary paths. Although many have evolved identically to dinosaurs on Earth, creatures from different periods of Earth’s history roam Cretasus at the same time.

The surface of Cretasus is marked by twenty giant valleys, each the size of a continent. For millions of years, stratospheric mountain ranges divided these valleys. The mountains completely isolated the life within. It is only in the most recent geological strata that the mountains have begun to erode. It is now possible to travel freely (but with difficulty) between valleys. The stunning conclusion: In each of Cretasus’ great valleys, independent evolution has brought forth life from a different period of Earth’s history.

No one yet understands how or why this happened. In all the varied planets that humanity has found, not one has exhibited such a startling similarity to Earth. Scientists now view the planet as a great biological secret waiting to be unlocked.

The most explored valley is known simply as “the Main Valley.” The Main Valley is where the first Confederate settlers arrived. They set up a colony, the Union followed, and now the Main Valley has dozens of colonies, hundreds of small settlements, a handful of military bases and Cretasus’ only city to speak

of – New Savannah. The Main Valley is occupied by three million inhabitants. This isn’t much, considering the valley is roughly the size of North and South America combined.

The main valley also is home to dinosaurs primarily from Earth’s Cretaceous era. A mix of creatures who lived roughly 64 to 110 million years ago on Earth intermingle freely and inexplicably there. They are accompanied by a wide variety of natural flora, giving the main valley every terrain from desert to plain to swamp to steamy jungle.

To the east lies “East Valley.” East Valley can be accessed through the air or by overland travel through several treacherous mountain passes. It is barely explored and no one has taken a full survey. It appears to be home to dinosaurs from an earlier era of Earth’s Cretaceous period.

To the west lies “Mammoth Valley.” Mammoth Valley is known for its large herds of woolly mammoths, which cross the mountain range occasionally to graze in Main Valley. A host of other ancient mammals also live in Mammoth Valley.

While no other valley is explored, they all have been aerially scouted, except for two – Cloud Valley, cloaked in low-lying clouds, and Storm Valley, perpetually obscured by terrible storms. Both remain completely inaccessible. Many intrepid adventurers have set out to map the lesser-known valleys, but only a few have returned. They bring stories of alien cities, strange creatures and dinosaurs that *could* have evolved on Earth, but didn’t. There is the consistent rumor of intelligent reptilian humanoids living in the far valleys and intelligent primates of some sort in Mammoth Valley. But no one knows if these are true discoveries or the swaggering boasts of adventurers whose tales cannot be confirmed.



The Dinosaurs

The dinosaurs on Cretasus are a virtual index to those from early Earth. Creatures from different eras walk side by side, including tyrannosaurus rex, stegosaurus, oviraptor, ankylosaurus, diplodocus, brachiosaurus, pachycephalosaur, allosaurus, styracosaurus, velociraptor and triceratops.

Some of the dinosaurs are the classic dumb brutes we all know so well. But most are not. Velociraptors have near-human intelligence and live in organized tribes that loosely connect into larger nations. Tyrannosaurus rex live in widely dispersed family groups whose members remember genealogies for hundreds of years. Triceratops travel in large herds with rigorous social organization. Almost every species has its own language and the more intelligent ones have dialects specific to each region.

Dinosaur life is not just sleep-eat-mate-die. It has just as much politics as human life, if not more. Tribes of the same species routinely quarrel over territory, hunting and grazing rights, and mating. Ambitious tribes have been known to go to war against neighboring tribes solely to expand their domains. Within the tribe, aspiring leaders scheme to overthrow their superiors, competitive rivals kill the children of their enemies, and overt political factions emerge.

There are alliances between tribes of similar personality or situation, and on rare occasions inter-species alliances form to counter a common threat. As humans have become more familiar with dinosaur languages (and vice versa), there have even been human-dinosaur alliances. The Confederacy is allied with several velociraptor tribes, with whom it trades food in exchange for their disruption of Union facilities.

Some species – in particular, some tribes within certain species – remember events for lifetimes, and will often fight (or fight for their allies) for reasons long since buried. Certain herbivore tribes are known for their revenge instinct – they hunt down and murder the young of carnivores that feed off of them. For instance, when a strong leader emerged among one triceratops herd, he organized several herds into one massive war force that drove out two nearby tyrannosaurus rex families, killing one of the T-rexes in the process.

The most frightening aspect of dinosaur intelligence – at least from a human perspective – is their strategic talent. Velociraptors have been known to stage false retreats in order to lure attackers into an ambush. T-rex make a point of traveling far apart so their numbers can't be easily ascertained. Ceratosaurus, patient and observant, like to set ambushes. Many an unwary dino hunter has made the fatal discovery that his prey is as smart as he.

The Settlements

New Savannah is the largest city on Cretasus. It abuts a massive inland ocean, just like its terrestrial namesake. New Savannah was founded by the Confederacy in 2185 and still maintains strong ties. With the mountains on one side, the ocean on the other

and thick jungle all around, it is easy to defend and, if you don't know it's there, hard to locate.

While New Savannah is a civilian city, there are several Confederate military bases along the shores of the same inland ocean. Fort Tecumseh and Fort Apache are two of them. Fort Tecumseh holds the main pass between New Savannah and “the back country” (as the rebels call the raw wilderness of Cretasus), while Fort Apache guards a cluster of hatcheries.

The Confederate hatcheries are tended by specially trained civilians with a strong affinity for animals. They are guarded by Dino Warriors, the elite trained cavalry who ride dinosaurs. Dinosaurs from the hatcheries are born into domesticity, making them much easier to train than their wild-born counterparts. In the hatcheries lies the hope that every army can be trained and equipped with dinosaur allies. If such a force ever took to space, it might be able to reclaim the Confederacy's lost glory.

The forts, hatcheries and larger Confederate settlements are supplied by convoys of brachiosauruses, diplodocuses and other animals. Smaller settlements rely on independent merchants and their mounts. Land routes can be extremely dangerous – travelers must often pass through the hunting grounds of tyrannosauruses, allosauruses and other large predators. The Confederacy has minimized its losses by using large dinosaurs supported by heavy weapons, but many independent merchants are never heard from again.

The largest Union presence is Fort Lincoln, which sits atop a mountain not far from Fort Tecumseh. The Confederacy has made every effort (short of war) to sabotage the fort, but has not yet succeeded. From Fort Lincoln, the Union has established smaller outposts across the main valley. In addition to its highly guarded research labs that experiment with the technology for ironclads (the advanced fighting suits it hopes to deploy against the rebels), the Union also owns mines, refineries, and oil wells scattered throughout the wilderness, which it resupplies with vehicle convoys.

Dotted around New Savannah and the forts are countless ranches, farms, small towns, prospectors and their mines, hunting lodges, mills and other settlements. These vary in loyalty. Generally, the smaller the settlement, the less they care about politics.

The many settlements with no strong loyalty to either Confederate or Union are called freetowns. There are as many freetowns as there are loyal towns. Freetowns usually lack a military, although they have sheriffs and plenty of settlers ready to take up arms to defend themselves. The larger freetowns actually have a “town square” complete with saloons, a post office, a bank, a hotel, a jail, a mill and a store or two, all surrounded by farms and ranches spreading over several miles. Smaller freetowns might be nothing more than a single building serving as combined saloon, hotel and store.

New settlers see Cretasus as an untamed land full of possibilities. Anyone can have land of their own on Cretasus, provided they're hardy enough to carve it out and defend it from the wilderness.

