

AMERICAN MUSEUM NATURAL HISTORY

Dinosaurs Among Us: The Link to Birds

Week 1

Introduction to Sunny Hwang

Sunny: My name is Sunny Hwang and I'm a first year grad student at Columbia University. I'm getting my Ph.D. in paleontology and I'm based at the Museum because the Museum has basically the best fossil collection in the world. Mark Norell is my graduate advisor, which means that he assigns me projects and guides me along in my research towards my Ph.D. I hope to get a university position where I can teach and do research, which would be combining the two things that I like to do most. A lot of the work we do at the Museum is systematics research, which means that we try to find out where organisms belong in their family trees. You pick out characters, or features that are interesting about those characters and you describe them and then you compare them to other dinosaurs and see how they match up. For *Microraptor*, the list of characters that we have is 205 characters long. So the unglamorous, everyday work of the paleontologist is to go through all 205 characters and see if your specimens have them or don't have them.