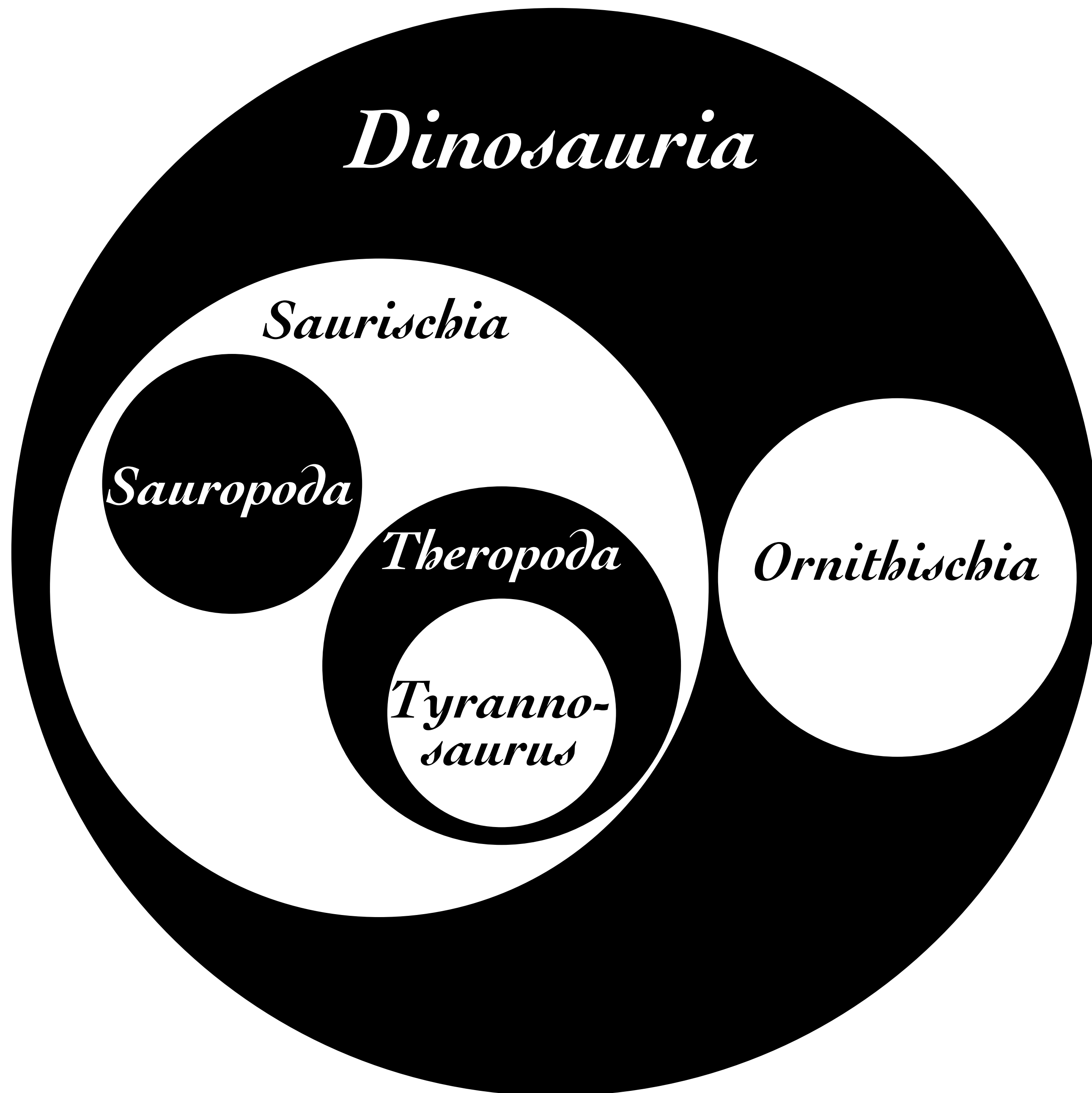


# *Tyrannosaurus rex*



**This is the largest predator to ever live in North America.** Though there were larger carnivores in Mesozoic oceans and even larger predatory theropods (such as *Spinosaurus* and the recently-discovered *Mapusaurus*) Tyrannosaurs are possibly the most famous carnivores of all time.

Non-avian dinosaurs lived on this planet for over 160 million years. They were very successful until 65 million years ago, an asteroid or comet 9 km (6 miles) in diameter hit the Earth at 60,000 miles an hour, releasing over a million times more energy than the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

As a result, our smaller, opportunistic ancestors thrived in a world wherein we were ultimately able to evolve and finally appreciate dinosaurs and their surviving descendants, the birds.