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Teachings Evolution and Fossil Record of African Proboscidea

The landscape of southwestern Wyoming around the ghost town of Fossil is beautiful but harsh; a dry, high mountain desert with cool nights and long, cold winters inhabited by a sparse mountain desert community. But during the early Eocene, more than fifty million years ago, it was a subtropical lake, surrounded by volcanoes and forests and teeming with life. Buried within the sun-baked limestone is spectacular evidence of the lush vegetation and plentiful fauna of the ancient past, a transitional ecosystem giving us clues to how North America recovered from a great extinction event that wiped out dinosaurs and the majority of all species on the planet. Paleontologists have been conducting excavations at Fossil Butte for more than 150 years, and with *The Lost World of Fossil Lake*, one of the world's leading experts on the fossils from this spectacular locality takes readers on a fascinating journey through the history of the discovery and exploration of the site. Deftly mixing incredible color photographs of the remarkable fossils uncovered at the site with an

explanation of their evolutionary significance, Grande presents an unprecedented, comprehensive portrait of the site, its treasures, and what we've learned from them. Grande presents a broad range of fossilized organisms from Fossil Lake—from single-celled algae to palm trees to crocodiles—and together they make this long-extinct community come to life in all its diversity and splendor. A field guide and atlas round out the book, enabling readers to identify and classify the majority of the known fossils from the site. Lavishly produced in full color, *The Lost World of Fossil Lake* is a stunning reminder of the intellectual and physical beauty of scientific investigation—and a breathtaking window onto our planet's long-lost past. Fossil fuel subsidies strain public budgets, and contribute to climate change and local air pollution. Despite widespread agreement among experts about the benefits of reforming fossil fuel subsidies, repeated international commitments to eliminate them, and valiant efforts by some countries to reform them, they continue to persist. This book helps explain this conundrum, by exploring the politics of fossil fuel subsidies and their reform. Bringing

together scholars and practitioners, the book offers new case studies both from countries that have undertaken subsidy reform, and those that have yet to do so. It explores the roles of various intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions in promoting fossil fuel subsidy reform at the international level, as well as conceptual aspects of fossil fuel subsidies. This is essential reading for researchers and practitioners, and students of political science, international relations, law, public policy, and environmental studies. This title is also available as Open Access. Knowledge of the evolutionary history of birds has much improved in recent decades. Fossils from critical time periods are being described at unprecedented rates and modern phylogenetic analyses have provided a framework for the interrelationships of the extant groups. This book gives an overview of the avian fossil record and its paleobiological significance, and it is the only up-to-date textbook that covers both Mesozoic and more modern-type Cenozoic birds in some detail. The reader is introduced to key features of basal avians and the morphological transformations that have occurred in the evolution towards modern birds. An account of the Cenozoic fossil record sheds light on the biogeographic history of the extant avian groups and discusses fossils in the context of current phylogenetic hypotheses. This review of the evolutionary history of birds not only addresses students and established researchers, but it may also be a

useful source of information for anyone else with an interest in the evolution of birds and a moderate background in biology and geology. The world-renowned paleontologist Richard Fortey provides a comprehensive guide to all aspects of fossils and their use in reconstructing the history of life on Earth. Extensively illustrated in full color throughout, this fifth edition of *Fossils* includes the most recent advances in our understanding of the fossil record. In *The Fossil Trail*, Ian Tattersall, the head of the Anthropology Department at the American Museum of Natural History, takes us on a sweeping tour of the study of human evolution, offering a colorful history of fossil discoveries and a revealing insider's look at how these finds have been interpreted - and misinterpreted - through time. All the major figures and discoveries are here. We meet Lamarck and Cuvier and Darwin (we learn that Darwin's theory of evolution, though a bombshell, was very congenial to a Victorian ethos of progress), right up to modern theorists such as Niles Eldredge and Stephen Jay Gould. Most major recent advances in understanding the history of life on Earth have been through the study of exceptionally well preserved biotas (Fossil-Lagerstätten). These are windows on the history of life on Earth and can provide a fairly complete picture of the evolution of ecosystems through time. This book follows the success of *Evolution of Fossil Ecosystems* by the same authors which covered Fossil-Lagerstätten around the world. The success of the first book

prompted this new book which draws on four localities from the original book and adds another ten, all located in North America. Following an introduction to Fossil-Lagerstätten, each chapter deals with a single fossil locality. Each chapter contains a brief introduction placing the Lagerstätte in an evolutionary context; there then follows a history of study of the locality; the background sedimentology, stratigraphy and palaeoenvironment; a description of the biota; discussion of the palaeoecology, and a comparison with other Lagerstätten of a similar age and/or environment. At the end of the book is an Appendix listing museums in which to see exhibitions of fossils from each locality and suggestions for visiting the sites. "This book is the only single-authored, comprehensive volume on the history of marsupials which deals with both the living and extinct groups, and will interest all paleontologists and biologists concerned with mammalian evolution."--BOOK JACKET. This book synthesizes the large body of data and research relevant to an understanding of fossil horses from several disciplines including biology, geology and palaeontology. "A unique review of the many unusual and nearly worldwide occurrences of sabertooths and their relatives over more than 50 million years." —Choice With their spectacularly enlarged canines, sabertooth cats are among the most popular of prehistoric animals, yet it is surprising how little information about them is available for the

curious layperson. What's more, there were other sabertooths that were not cats, animals with exotic names like nimravids, barbourfelids, and thylacosmilids. Some were no taller than a domestic cat, others were larger than a lion, and some were as weird as their names suggest. Sabertooths continue to pose questions even for specialists. What did they look like? How did they use their spectacular canine teeth? And why did they finally go extinct? In this visual and intellectual treat of a book, Mauricio Antón tells their story in words and pictures, all scrupulously based on the latest scientific research. The book is a glorious wedding of science and art that celebrates the remarkable diversity of the life of the not-so-distant past. "The best paleomammal artist working today [and] his knowledge of sabertooths and their evolution is second to none." —Lars Werdelin, Swedish Museum of Natural History "Mauricio Antón is one of the best paleoartists. What sets him apart is the fact that he is a great paleontologist in his own right. Probably no one else has thought more about sabertooth than he has. As a result, his illustrations often demonstrate a particular behavior of the extinct mammal that he has personally researched or display a unique point of view." —Xiaoming Wang, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles Mammals are the dominant large animals of today, occurring in virtually every environment. This book is an account of the remarkable 320 million year long fossil record that documents

their origin, their long spell as no more than small, nocturnal creatures, and their explosive radiation since the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. Tom Kemp also unveils the exciting molecular evidence, which, coupled with important new fossils, is presently challenging current thinking on the interrelationships and historical biogeography of mammals. The Origin and Evolution of Mammals will be of interest to advanced undergraduate and graduate students as well as researchers in vertebrate palaeontology, biogeography, mammalian systematics and molecular taxonomy. It will also be welcomed by vertebrate fossil enthusiasts and evolutionary biologists of all levels with an interest in macroevolutionary problems. This book details the long, diverse, and complex phylogenetic history of elephants and their fossil relatives (the Proboscidea), whose origin is deeply embedded some 60 million years ago in Africa. Most of the major evolutionary events of proboscideans occurred in Africa, and these are examined in their geological, paleoecological, geographic, and faunal contexts. Updated information about feeding adaptations, taxonomy and systematics, genetics, and site occurrences is included and summarized in tables, figures, and charts. This is the first comprehensive review of African proboscideans and illustrates the need to more actively protect elephants and ensure their survival in modern ecosystems. Key Features Provides a comprehensive systematic review of

the African proboscidean fossil record Includes a summary of taxonomy, geochronology, biogeography and morphology Documents major faunal events including those associated with hominin origins Synthesizes new data from genomic, isotopic and microware analyses Emphasizes the role of elephants in ecosystems and the importance of conservation The author and illustrator draw on the surviving seven species of large cats and remains of their prehistoric ancestors to explain and illustrate their anatomy and function, social interaction, predatory behavior, prey treatment, and other aspects of the fascinating and fearsome creatures. The first English translation of Johannes Weigelt's 1927 classic makes available the seminal work in taphonomy, the study of how organisms die, decay, become entombed in sediments, and fossilize over time. Weigelt emphasized the importance of empirical work and made extensive observations of modern carcasses on the Texas Gulf Coast. He applied the results to evidence from the fossil record and demonstrated that an understanding of the postmortem fate of modern animals is crucial to making sound inferences about fossil vertebrate assemblages and their ecological communities. Weigelt spent sixteen months on the Gulf Coast in the mid-1920s, gathering evidence from the carcasses of cattle and other animals in the early stages of preservation. This book reports his observations. He discusses death and decomposition; classifies various modes of

death (drowning, cold, dehydration, fire, mud, quicksand, oil slicks, etc.); documents and analyzes the positions of carcasses; presents detailed data on carcass assemblages at the Smither's Lake site in Texas; and, in a final chapter, makes comparisons to carcass assemblages from the geologic past. He raises questions about whether much of the fossil record is a product of unusual events and, if so, what the implications are for paleoecological studies. The English edition of *Recent Vertebrate Carcasses* includes a foreword and a translator's note that comment on Weigelt's life and the significance of his work. The original bibliography has been brought up to date, and, where necessary, updated scientific and place names have been added to the text in brackets. An index of names, places, and subjects is included, and Weigelt's own photographs of carcasses and drawings of skeletons illustrate the text. "This textbook, aimed at advanced undergraduates and postgraduates in paleoanthropology courses, tackles a rather difficult task—that of presenting the substantial body of paleontological, genetic, geological and archaeological evidence regarding human evolution, and the associated scientific history, in a logical and readable way without sacrificing either clarity or detail... the sheer quality of the writing and explanatory synthesis in this book will undoubtedly make it a valuable resource for students for many years."

—PaleoAnthropology, 2010 This book focuses on the last ten million years of human history,

from the hominoid radiations to the emergence and diversification of modern humanity. It draws upon the fossil record to shed light on the key scientific issues, principles, methods, and history in paleoanthropology. The book proceeds through the fossil record of human evolution by historical stages representing the acquisition of major human features that explain the success and distinctive properties of modern *Homo sapiens*. Key features: Provides thorough coverage of the fossil record and sites, with data on key variables such as cranial capacity and body size estimates Offers a balanced, critical assessment of the interpretative models explaining pattern in the fossil record Each chapter incorporates a "Blind Alley" box focusing on once prevalent ideas now rejected such as the arboreal theory, seed-eating, single-species hypothesis, and Piltdown man Promotes critical thinking by students while allowing instructors flexibility in structuring their teaching Densely illustrated with informative, well-labelled anatomical drawings and photographs Includes an annotated bibliography for advanced inquiry Written by established leaders in the field, providing depth of expertise on evolutionary theory and anatomy through to functional morphology, this textbook is essential reading for all advanced undergraduate students and beginning graduate students in biological anthropology. Fishes have a unique evolutionary history that stretches back in time more than 450 million years. They are

incredibly ancient-older than the dinosaurs-and include the ancestors of all limbed vertebrates living on land, even humans. In *Discovering Fossil Fishes*, John Maisey traces the evolution of fishes over the course of nearly half a billion years, describing the discovery of their extraordinary fossil remains and explaining what these ancient animals tell us about our own place in the history of life. Combining current scientific information with entertaining tales about historic and contemporary fieldwork, Maisey brings to life the development of armored fishes, monster sharks, and fishes with arms as he reveals the subtleties of evolution's greatest success story. More abundant and more diverse than their air-breathing cousins, fishes today dominate the seas and freshwaters of Earth. Through outstanding full-color photographs of their fossils and of fossil reconstructions by artists David Miller and Ivy Rutzky, along with informative photographs, charts, diagrams, and drawings, we discover a staggering half-billion-year history in which lies our own watery origins. For 65 million years dinosaurs ruled the Earth-until a deadly asteroid forced their extinction. But what accounts for the incredible longevity of dinosaurs? A renowned scientist now provides a startling explanation that is rewriting the history of the Age of Dinosaurs. Dinosaurs were pretty amazing creatures-real-life monsters that have the power to fascinate us. And their fiery Hollywood ending only serves to make the story that much more

dramatic. But fossil evidence demonstrates that dinosaurs survived several mass extinctions, and were seemingly unaffected by catastrophes that decimated most other life on Earth. What could explain their uncanny ability to endure through the ages? Biologist and earth scientist Peter Ward now accounts for the remarkable indestructibility of dinosaurs by connecting their unusual respiration system with their ability to adapt to Earth's changing environment—a system that was ultimately bequeathed to their descendants, birds. By tracing the evolutionary path back through time and carefully connecting the dots from birds to dinosaurs, Ward describes the unique form of breathing shared by these two distant relatives and demonstrates how this simple but remarkable characteristic provides the elusive explanation to a question that has thus far stumped scientists. Nothing short of revolutionary in its bold presentation of an astonishing theory, *Out of Thin Air* is a story of science at the edge of discovery. Ward is an outstanding guide to the process of scientific detection. Audacious and innovative in his thinking, meticulous and thoroughly detailed in his research, only a scientist of his caliber is capable of telling this surprising story. The first edition of *Evolution of Fossil Ecosystems* was widely praised for its coverage and approach in describing and illustrating 14 well-known fossil sites from around the world. The authors have now updated the text and added 6 new chapters with many new color illustrations. Following a

general introduction to fossil Lagerstätten, each chapter deals with a single site and follows the same format: its evolutionary position and significance; its background sedimentology, stratigraphy and palaeoenvironment; a description of the biota and palaeoecology; a comparison with other similar Lagerstätten; and a list of relevant museums and suggestions for visiting the sites. This study of exceptionally well-preserved fossil sites from different periods in geological time provides a picture of the evolution of ecosystems through the ages. Covers several sites that are not listed in other Lagerstätten books making this the most comprehensive book on the topic; Beautifully illustrated throughout with more than 450 color photographs and diagrams; Provides value to a wide range of students and professionals in palaeontology and related sciences. Crinoids have graced the oceans for more than 500 million years. Among the most attractive fossils, crinoids had a key role in the ecology of marine communities through much of the fossil record, and their remains are prominent rock forming constituents of many limestones. This is the first comprehensive volume to bring together their form and function, classification, evolutionary history, occurrence, preservation and ecology. The main part of the book is devoted to assemblages of intact fossil crinoids, which are described in their geological setting in twenty-three chapters ranging from the Ordovician to the Tertiary. The final chapter

deals with living sea lilies and feather stars. The volume is exquisitely illustrated with abundant photographs and line drawings of crinoids from sites around the world. This authoritative account recreates a fascinating picture of fossil crinoids for paleontologists, geologists, evolutionary and marine biologists, ecologists and amateur fossil collectors. "This volume includes detailed accounts of the morphology and distribution of the fossil snakes of North America and also remarks on their evolutionary, zoogeographic, and paleoecological patterns. The heart of the book consists of detailed systematic accounts of the known fossil snakes of North America and their localities. Extinct fossil taxa are discussed and illustrated, and many are re-described on the basis of new information. The book provides illustrations of diagnostic vertebrae and criteria for the identification of presently living fossil snake taxa as well as descriptions of the modern characteristics and ranges of these species." "Color photographs in the 16-page insert present a catalog of representative living snake species." --Book Jacket. Feathers are one of the most unique characteristics of modern birds and represent the most complex and colourful type of skin derivative within vertebrates, while also fulfilling various biological roles, including flight, thermal insulation, display, and sensory function. For years it was generally assumed that the origin of flight was the main driving force for the evolution of feathers. However, various

discoveries of dinosaur species with filamentous body coverings, made over the past 20 years, have fundamentally challenged this idea and produced new evolutionary scenarios for the origin of feathers. This book is devoted to the origin and evolution of feathers, and highlights the impact of palaeontology on this research field by reviewing a number of spectacular fossil discoveries that document the increasing morphological complexity along the evolutionary path to modern birds. Also featuring chapters on fossil feather colours, feather development and its genetic control, the book offers a timely and comprehensive overview of this popular research topic. The title provides a historical account of the origin, rise, and importance of paleobiology. Drawing on a wealth of archival material, Sepkoski shows how the movement was promoted by an influential group of paleontologists and examines the intellectual, disciplinary, and political dynamics involved in the ascendancy of paleobiology. "Riveting. ... Pattison's uncanny ability [is] to write evocatively about science. ... In this, he is every bit as good as the best scientist writers." —New York Times Book Review (Editors' Choice) "Brilliant. ... A work of staggering depth." —Minneapolis Star Tribune A decade in the making, *Fossil Men* is a scientific detective story played out in anatomy and the natural history of the human body: the first full-length account of the discovery of a startlingly unpredicted human ancestor more than a million years older than Lucy It is the

ultimate mystery: where do we come from? In 1994, a team led by fossil-hunting legend Tim White uncovered a set of ancient bones in Ethiopia's Afar region. Radiometric dating of nearby rocks indicated the resulting skeleton, classified as *Ardipithecus ramidus*—nicknamed "Ardi"—was an astounding 4.4 million years old, more than a million years older than the world-famous "Lucy." The team spent the next 15 years studying the bones in strict secrecy, all while continuing to rack up landmark fossil discoveries in the field and becoming increasingly ensnared in bitter disputes with scientific peers and Ethiopian bureaucrats. When finally revealed to the public, Ardi stunned scientists around the world and challenged a half-century of orthodoxy about human evolution—how we started walking upright, how we evolved our nimble hands, and, most significantly, whether we were descended from an ancestor that resembled today's chimpanzee. But the discovery of Ardi wasn't just a leap forward in understanding the roots of humanity—it was an attack on scientific convention and the leading authorities of human origins, triggering an epic feud about the oldest family skeleton. In *Fossil Men*, acclaimed journalist Kermit Pattison brings us a cast of eccentric, obsessive scientists, including White, an uncompromising perfectionist whose virtuoso skills in the field were matched only by his propensity for making enemies; Gen Suwa, a Japanese savant whose deep expertise about teeth rivaled anyone on Earth; Owen Lovejoy, a

onetime creationist-turned-paleoanthropologist with radical insights into human locomotion; Berhane Asfaw, who survived imprisonment and torture to become Ethiopia's most senior paleoanthropologist; Don Johanson, the discoverer of Lucy, who had a rancorous falling out with the Ardi team; and the Leakeys, for decades the most famous family in paleoanthropology. Based on a half-decade of research in Africa, Europe and North America, *Fossil Men* is not only a brilliant investigation into the origins of the human lineage, but the oldest of human emotions: curiosity, jealousy, perseverance and wonder. Fossils are discussed in the context of Creationism. "This book details the long, diverse, and complex phylogenetic history of elephants and their fossil relatives (the Proboscidea), whose origin is deeply embedded some 60 million years ago in Africa. Most of the major evolutionary events of proboscideans occurred in Africa, and these are examined in their geological, paleoecological, geographic, and faunal contexts"-- In this long-awaited sequel Kirk Johnson and Ray Troll are back on a road trip—driving, flying, and boating their way from Baja, California to northern Alaska in search of the fossil secrets of North America's Pacific coast. They hunt for fossils, visit museums, meet scientists and paleonerds, and sleuth out untold stories of extinct worlds. As one of the oldest coasts on earth, the west coast is a rich ground for fossil discovery. Its wonders include extinct marine mammals, pygmy mammoths, oyster bears, immense

ammonites, shark-bitten camels, polar dinosaurs, Alaskan palms, California walruses, and a lava-baked rhinoceros. Join in for a fossil journey through deep time and discover how the west coast became the place it is today. This introduction traces the history of paleoanthropology from its beginnings in the 18th century to the latest fossil finds. It concentrates on the fossil evidence for human evolution, making reference to the relevant archaeological evidence when appropriate. The New York Times bestselling author of *The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels* draws on the latest data and new insights to challenge everything you thought you knew about the future of energy. For over a decade, philosopher and energy expert Alex Epstein has predicted that any negative impacts of fossil fuel use on our climate will be outweighed by the unique benefits of fossil fuels to human flourishing--including their unrivaled ability to provide low-cost, reliable energy to billions of people around the world, especially the world's poorest people. And contrary to what we hear from media "experts" about today's "renewable revolution" and "climate emergency," reality has proven Epstein right: Fact: Fossil fuels are still the dominant source of energy around the world, and growing fast--while much-hyped renewables are causing skyrocketing electricity prices and increased blackouts. Fact: Fossil-fueled development has brought global poverty to an all-time low. Fact: While fossil fuels have contributed to the 1 degree of warming in the

last 170 years, climate-related deaths are at all-time lows thanks to fossil-fueled development. What does the future hold? In *Fossil Future*, Epstein, applying his distinctive "human flourishing framework" to the latest evidence, comes to the shocking conclusion that the benefits of fossil fuels will continue to far outweigh their side effects—including climate impacts—for generations to come. The path to global human flourishing, Epstein argues, is a combination of using more fossil fuels, getting better at "climate mastery," and establishing "energy freedom" policies that allow nuclear and other truly promising alternatives to reach their full long-term potential. Today's pervasive claims of imminent climate catastrophe and imminent renewable energy dominance, Epstein shows, are based on what he calls the "anti-impact framework"—a set of faulty methods, false assumptions, and anti-human values that have caused the media's designated experts to make wildly wrong predictions about fossil fuels, climate, and renewables for the last fifty years. Deeply researched and wide-ranging, this book will cause you to rethink everything you thought you knew about the future of our energy use, our environment, and our climate. Darwin's theory of evolution was for more than a century dogged by a major problem: the evidence proving the connections between the main groups of organisms was nowhere to be found. By the 1970s this absence of 'transitional fossils' was hotly debated; some palaeontologists wondered if these 'missing

links' had been so quick that no trace of them was left. However, during the past three decades fossils of walking whales from Pakistan, feathered dinosaurs from China, fish with feet from the Arctic Circle, ape-like humans from Africa, and many more bizarre creatures that fill in crucial gaps in our understanding of evolution have all been unearthed. The first account of the hunt for evolution's 'missing links', *Written in Stone* shows how these discoveries have revolutionised palaeontology, and explores what its findings might mean for our place on earth. Fossils have fascinated humans for centuries. From the smallest diatoms to the largest dinosaurs, finding a fossil is an exciting and rewarding experience. But where did they come from, and how long have they been around? These and many other questions are answered in this remarkable book. The Fossil Book will teach you about: The origin of fossils How to start your own fossil Collection What kinds of fossils can be commonly found The age of fossils How scientists find and preserve fossils How to identify kinds of fossils How the flood affected fossil formation The Geologic Column Diagram The difference between evolutionists' and creationists' views on fossils The "four Cs" biblical creation The different kinds of rocks fossils are found in coal and oil formation Learning about fossils, their origins, and how to collect them can be both fun and educational. The abundance of both marine and land fossils and the locations they are found in

is a fascinating subject for students of all ages and has been studied by scientists and laypersons alike for many years. Learn what all the excitement is about! Hans Thewissen, a leading researcher in the field of whale paleontology and anatomy, gives a sweeping first-person account of the discoveries that brought to light the early fossil record of whales. As evidenced in the record, whales evolved from herbivorous forest-dwelling ancestors that resembled tiny deer to carnivorous monsters stalking lakes and rivers and to serpentlike denizens of the coast. Thewissen reports on his discoveries in the wilds of India and Pakistan, weaving a narrative that reveals the day-to-day adventures of fossil collection, enriching it with local flavors from South Asian culture and society. The reader senses the excitement of the digs as well as the rigors faced by scientific researchers, for whom each new insight gives rise to even more questions, and for whom at times the logistics of just staying alive may trump all science. In his search for an understanding of how modern whales live their lives, Thewissen also journeys to Japan and Alaska to study whales and wild dolphins. He finds answers to his questions about fossils by studying the anatomy of otters and porpoises and examining whale embryos under the microscope. In the book's final chapter, Thewissen argues for approaching whale evolution with the most powerful tools we have and for combining all the fields of science in pursuit of knowledge. Xiaoming

Wang and Richard H. Tedford combine their research with Mauricio Antón's impeccable reconstructions to present a remarkable portrait of canids over the past 40 million years. Wang and Tedford cull their history from the most recent scientific research conducted on the vast collections of the American Museum of Natural History and other leading institutions. With their rich fossil record, diverse adaptations to various environments, and different predatory specializations, canids are an ideal model organism for the mapping of predator behavior and morphological specializations. They also offer an excellent contrast to felids, which remain entrenched in extreme predatory specializations. The innovative illustrated approach of this book transforms the science of paleontology into a thrilling visual experience, and it forms the perfect accompaniment to an extremely important branch of animal and fossil study. In *Fossil Forensics*, acclaimed Christian author and scientist Jerry Bergman examines the many claims about evolution in the fossil record and shows why they don't stand up to the evidence. The book includes photographs, diagrams, illustrations, and in-depth descriptions showing why the fossils give better evidence to creation instead of evolution. Knowledge of the evolutionary history of birds has much improved in recent decades. Fossils from critical time periods are being described at unprecedented rates and modern phylogenetic analyses have provided a framework for the

interrelationships of the extant groups. This book gives an overview of the avian fossil record and its paleobiological significance, and it is the only up-to-date textbook that covers both Mesozoic and more modern-type Cenozoic birds in some detail. The reader is introduced to key features of basal avians and the morphological transformations that have occurred in the evolution towards modern birds. An account of the Cenozoic fossil record sheds light on the biogeographic history of the extant avian groups and discusses fossils in the context of current phylogenetic hypotheses. This review of the evolutionary history of birds not only addresses students and established researchers, but it may also be a useful source of information for anyone else with an interest in the evolution of birds and a moderate background in biology and geology. Every fossil tells a story. Best-selling paleontology author Donald R. Prothero describes twenty-five famous, beautifully preserved fossils in a gripping scientific history of life on Earth. Recounting the adventures behind the discovery of these objects and fully interpreting their significance within the larger fossil record, Prothero creates a riveting history of life on our planet. The twenty-five fossils portrayed in this book catch animals in their evolutionary splendor as they transition from one kind of organism to another. We witness extinct plants and animals of microscopic and immense size and thrilling diversity. We learn about fantastic land and sea creatures that

have no match in nature today. Along the way, we encounter such fascinating fossils as the earliest trilobite, Olenellus; the giant shark Carcharocles; the "fishibian" Tiktaalik; the "Frogamander" and the "Turtle on the Half-Shell"; enormous marine reptiles and the biggest dinosaurs known; the first bird, Archaeopteryx; the walking whale Ambulocetus; the gigantic hornless rhinoceros Paraceratherium, the largest land mammal that ever lived; and the Australopithecus nicknamed "Lucy," the oldest human skeleton. We meet the scientists and adventurers who pioneered paleontology and learn about the larger intellectual and social contexts in which their discoveries were made. Finally, we find out where to see these splendid fossils in the world's great museums. Ideal for all who love prehistoric landscapes and delight in the history of science, this book makes a treasured addition to any bookshelf, stoking curiosity in the evolution of life on Earth.

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