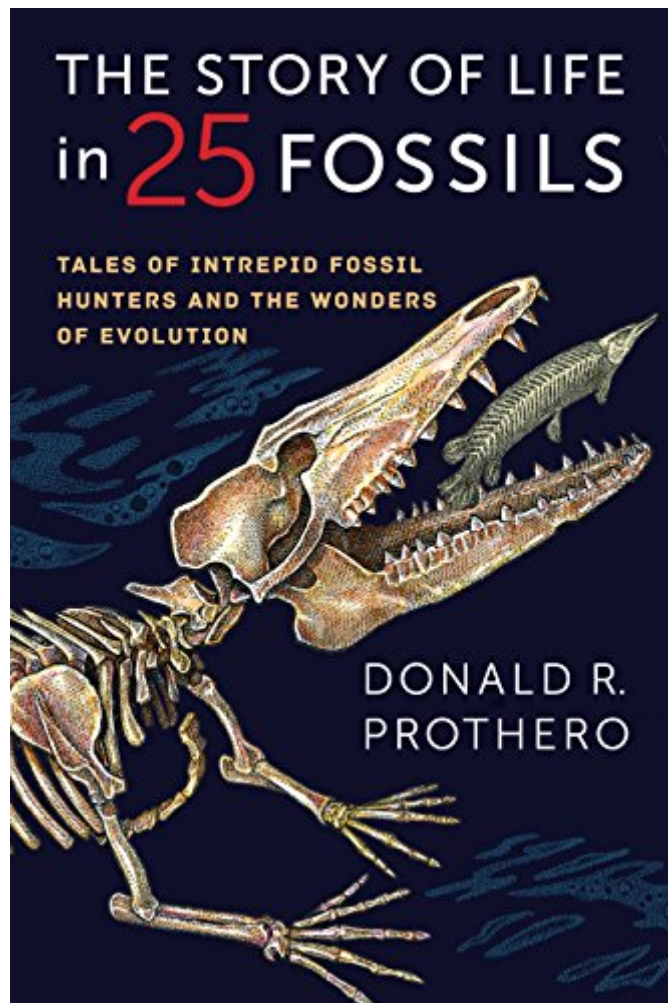


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The Story Of Life In 25 Fossils: Tales Of Intrepid Fossil Hunters And The Wonders Of Evolution



Synopsis

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 and enlightening overview for anyone interested in the history of life on our planet. The twenty-five fossils lovingly 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 "Frogamander" and the "Turtle on the Half Shell"; the "fishibian" *Tiktalik*; the first bird, *Archaeopteryx*; the walking whale *Ambulocetus*; enormous marine reptiles and the biggest dinosaurs known; the gigantic hornless rhinoceros *Paraceratherium*, the largest land mammal that ever lived; and the *Australopithecus* nicknamed "Lucy," the oldest human skeleton. We learn about the scientists and adventurers who pioneered paleontology and the larger intellectual and social contexts in which their discoveries were made. Finally, we are told 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, Prothero's new book will be a treasured addition to any bookshelf, stoking curiosity in the evolution and life on Earth.

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Customer Reviews

Excellent Book on the most important fossils. These fossils in this book make a convincing case for Evolution and Transitional forms. This book gives an excellent example, of the Art of Science. What do I mean by the Art of Science? This means that you don't need complete details or information to determine a trend and make a conclusion. For example, the hominin trail is not complete and has gaps in it, but there is enough information to draw a conclusion that Man evolved through a series of transitional forms of Hominins going back at least 6 million years, what is in doubt is the trail of transitional forms that led to Man. The fossil record of evolution of the whale is also not complete and has gaps, but, a conclusion can be determined that the whales have a common ancestor of a four legged terrestrial animal which lived 50 or more million years ago. The evolution of the horse is most complete in transitional forms that clearly indicates that they evolved from a four toed animal of about 40 million years ago with the toes evolving to a single toe in horse. The Art of Science is to gather enough information to establish a trend and draw a conclusion. Now if it happens that the conclusion is wrong, it which conclusions in science are not scripture, but are tentative with uncertainty, then you make the necessary corrections and move on. Science will evidently weed out that is wrong and is continually moving in the direction of what is right.

Transitional fossils abound but they can be arranged in a seeming orthogenetic (linear) array because architectural transformations of particular traits can best be studied that way. Transitional fossils also tell us that transitions from aquatic to terrestrial, terrestrial to aerial, and the other ways around took place many times and in unpredictable directions. This book brings to life how different and how long-lived were the terrestrial, aquatic, and aerial biotas of the past.

The book was good and well written. However, my pleasure in reading it was considerably reduced by the absolutely miserable job someone made in transcribing it for my Kindle ap. In several cases, pages were out of order or missing entirely. When turning to the next page, on several occasions I

found myself reading text that was non-sequential with the previous one and, sometimes from a completely separate chapter. Many pages appear to have been omitted entirely. Further, the chapter headings were so miserably displayed I couldn't determine the subject matter until I read the text. Someone should have proofread the Kindle version before it was released.

Prothero is a very readable writer. This book is not designed for specialists in geology so anyone can get something out of it. Contains interesting photos and drawings that help back up his claims.

I really enjoyed this book. It is well written, covers many more than 25 fossils, and gives a marvelous sequential view of evolution and the fossil record. If you are fascinated with the ancient past and the earth's geological and evolutionary history, you will enjoy this clearly written and well illustrated book. Enough said!

Amazing how each animal developed from another. What a ride through evolution. How can anyone not believe in this when it all fits together so well.

All the god botherers should read and try to understand this stuff. Beautiful evidential science.

Humanizes evolution, great respect for some of the notables. Readable, some pretty cool trivia thru out. Ties evolution together nicely.

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