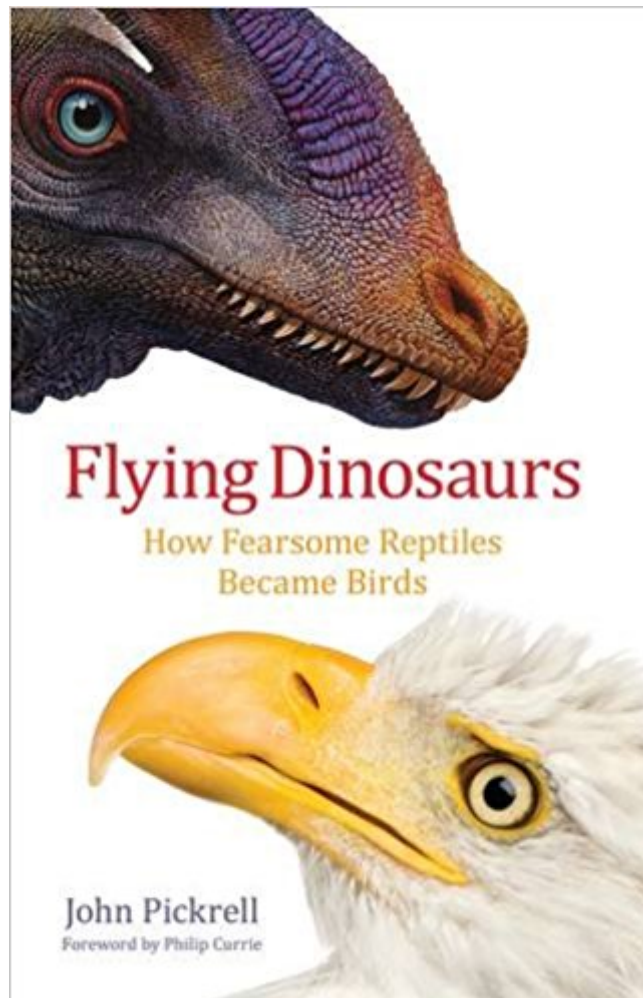




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Flying Dinosaurs: How Fearsome Reptiles Became Birds



Synopsis

The discovery of stunning, feathered dinosaur fossils coming out of China since 2006 suggest that these creatures were much more bird-like than paleontologists previously imagined. Further evidence—bones, genetics, eggs, behavior, and more—has shown a seamless transition from fleet-footed carnivores to the ancestors of modern birds. Mixing colorful portraits with news on the latest fossil findings and interviews with leading paleontologists in the United States, China, Europe, and Australia, John Pickrell explains and details dinosaurs' development of flight. This special capacity introduced a whole new range of abilities for the animals and helped them survive a mass extinction, when thousands of other dinosaur species that once populated the Earth did not. Pickrell also turns his journalistic eye toward the stories behind the latest discoveries, investigating the role of the Chinese black market in trading fossils, the controversies among various dinosaur hunters, the interference of national governments intent on protecting scientific information, and the race to publish findings first that make this research such a dynamic area of science.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Columbia University Press (September 16, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0231171781

ISBN-13: 978-0231171786

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 6.5 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 31 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #630,083 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #84 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Dinosaurs #138 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Fossils #267 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Paleontology

Customer Reviews

In *Flying Dinosaurs* John Pickrell challenges everything you were told about dinosaurs as a child.... Through extensive research and interviews with leading paleontologists, *Flying Dinosaurs* charts how each new discovery confirmed the link between dinosaurs and birds.... The author's fascination with dinosaurs is evident throughout the book. But his passion aside, it takes a skilled science writer to transform the incremental progress of a field such as paleontology into a narrative that sustains a

book. (Nicky Phillips The Sydney Morning Herald)After digesting all that Pickrell has to offer, it will be difficult for any reader to think about dinosaurs -- or birds -- in the same ways they had before. (Publishers Weekly)[An] engaging book. (GrrlScientist - a Guardian Blog)A remarkable book, with a wealth of interviews with palaeontologists and a comprehensive catalogue of virtually all the findings of feathered dinosaurs since 1996. It's a useful catch-up if you have lost track of this rapidly developing area of palaeontology, and full of fascinating, unusual factsâ•did you know that birds are the closest living relatives to the crocodile? (Bill Condie Cosmos Magazine)[Flying Dinosaurs] deftly covers the history behind the decades-old debate over just when and how birds first arose. (Bruce Dorminey Forbes)Pickrell covers the history of changing thought on dinosaurs and the bird-dinosaur link.... Pickrell's book is well written and accessible, and thus is an excellent companion. (Greg Laden Greg Laden's Blog)A detailed and timely overview of our rapidly-improving scientific understanding of how massive, lumbering dinosaurs evolved into agile, flying birds. (Mike Lee The Conversation)A readable introduction to the subject. (Ian Paulsen The Bridbooker Report)[A] fast-paced.... Fascinating read. (BirdWatching)A well-structured overview of the various lines of evidence connecting the evolution of birds with that of theropod dinosaurs.... Any general reader or student interested in dinosaurs should find it a pleasure to read.... Highly recommended. (Choice)An exceptional read.... I would recommend this volume not only to dinosaur aficionados, who will find in its pages a plethora of interesting facts about dinosaurs and birds, but also to professional paleontologists who are looking for a comprehensive yet quick account on the most recent research in dinosaur paleontology. (Marco Signore Quarterly Review of Biology)Delightful and accessible. I highly recommend it for readers of all ages and backgrounds. (ZME Science)

John Pickrell is an award-winning science writer and the editor of Australian Geographic magazine. He has worked in London, Washington, D.C., and Sydney for numerous publications, including New Scientist, Science, Science News, and Cosmos. He has been a finalist for the Australian Museum's Eureka Prizes three times, has won an Earth Journalism Award, and has been featured in the 2011 and 2014 editions of The Best Australian Science Writing.

This was an enlightening summary of what has been going on in the past two decades with regards to paleontological research in the dinosaur to bird transition. I pride myself in keeping up with vertebrate paleontology, but Pickrell's well-researched review, especially of many of the new Chinese discoveries, held nuggets of information I had not completely mined. His writing style flows well and is designed for an audience familiar with science, but not equipped with all the jargon

various specialists sometime like to flaunt. Nice picture section in the back as well of species of birds and bird-dinosaurs rendered by some of the newer talent in paleo illustration. It's a shame that there is so much economic incentive for Chinese farmers to hastily excavate fossils that some valuable scientific information is lost and paleontologists have to be extra aware of possible fraud in doctoring some fossils.

Engaging with meat! Great job explaining how dinosaurs are the ancestors of birds and that modern fossil discoveries and well known scientists have **SHOWN HOW** this is possible. In fact, paleo-artists can now paint accurately with vivid colors because of new scientific technology that have allowed the true colors of the dinosaurs to be revealed, instead of just coloring them all brown. It's also about animal behavior and **HOW** the behavior of some birds today easily copies what we know of some dinosaur behavior, such as resting palms face up when not in flight, and of course feathers. Feathers not just for flight, but feathers for gliding or display or even protection and how they've **ADAPTED** for the niche or needs of the dinosaur in a particular environment. It's just plain common sense that the author points out the flightless birds today, which no longer or evolved to no longer need feathers for flight, such as the kiwi bird. Why not explore all the possibilities of feathers? Learning what we think feathers were initially used for while keeping in mind how complicated the dinosaur family tree has become in an ever-growing fossil database, is the cornerstone in understanding how birds evolved from the dinosaur family tree. Beaks, teeth, feathers, claws, and more can describe a dinosaur and fossils can tell us what is left of the dinosaurs today that we call **BIRDS!** Thanks for such an insightful book into the world of the modern versatile dinosaur!

While none of the info contained in the book was new for me, it was still a great summary of current theories and findings surrounding dinosaurs. Evolutionists, read to your heart's content. Mr. Pickrell does a fine job detailing the theory of birds with feathers as it grew from a theory with niche support in the 80s/90s to a fully support from the paleontologist community. He also provides history into the finds and what it now means for so-called bone poachers who steal into sites and sell the finds for high prices. His highlights of certain scientists and what they brought to the field add some weight and provide background to his narrative. The full-color photos in the middle are also amazing and allowed me to place dinosaurs within his narrative when he mentions them.

Excellent overview of the many exciting and fascinating discoveries of feathered dinosaurs. After reading this book, only the simpleton would still deny the firm connection between the Maniraptor

dinosaurs and modern day Avian ones.

A fun book, with good science, explanations and many colorful descriptions. The book should have been dry but absolutely was not, I did skip the end descriptions (the last sixth of the book) of individuals but looked at all the pictures beyond those.

Dinosaur News I had no idea how much dinosaurs - or I should say our understanding of them - has changed in the last 20 years, but John Pickrell tells the tale well, bringing in the science without losing imaginative language that helps the reader to grasp what is new or unusual in the story. I bought this to read with my dinosaur-infatuated grandson but I ended up reading it by myself because it was so engaging. My husband did too! As for 8-year-old grandson? Too busy right now. There are a few typos in the book which I hope will be corrected in a second edition.

Pickrell writes with an easy to read style giving explicit explanations, historical detail, scientific theories and current discoveries and research about flying dinosaurs. I found the book fascinating and was enthralled by stories of the early paleontologists and excited by the recent discoveries.

There has been a great deal new learned by archaeologists in last 25 years, and certainly since I was in school. This book is written for casual readers and summarizes the story of dinosaurs and birds as scientist has reconstructed the fossil record. In addition, new scientific study techniques are explained, techniques that allow scientists to draw conclusions from the minutest of details. Archaeology is not just about big bones hidden in the desert, any more. It is a fun read.

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