

is the scientific study of fossils

Paleontology is the Scientific Study of Fossils: Unlocking Earth's History and Its Industrial Implications

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Introduction: Paleontology is the scientific study of fossils.

Paleontology is the scientific study of fossils, the remains or traces of ancient life. It's a fascinating field that unveils Earth's rich history, from the origins of life to the evolution of complex ecosystems. But the implications of paleontology extend far beyond academic curiosity; it plays a crucial role in various industries, impacting everything from energy exploration to environmental management. This article delves into the world of paleontology, exploring its methodologies, significant discoveries, and particularly, its substantial contributions to industry.

The Scope of Paleontology: More Than Just Dinosaurs

Many associate paleontology solely with dinosaurs, but the field encompasses a far broader spectrum. Paleontology is the scientific study of fossils, encompassing a vast range of organisms, from microscopic bacteria to colossal

whales. Researchers analyze fossilized plants, animals, fungi, and even microbial mats to reconstruct past environments, understand evolutionary processes, and interpret the history of life on Earth. The study methods are diverse, ranging from fieldwork involving meticulous excavation and fossil preparation to laboratory analysis using advanced techniques like isotopic dating, scanning electron microscopy, and molecular analysis (where applicable).

Paleontology and the Fossil Fuel Industry

One of the most significant industrial applications of paleontology is in the fossil fuel industry. Paleontology is the scientific study of fossils, and understanding the distribution and formation of fossil fuels relies heavily on paleontological data. Specifically, the study of ancient plants and microorganisms helps pinpoint locations likely to contain oil and natural gas deposits. Paleontologists analyze fossilized pollen, spores, and microfossils to reconstruct ancient environments and identify sedimentary rocks with the potential to trap hydrocarbons. This information is crucial for efficient and targeted exploration, reducing the cost and risk associated with drilling.

Paleontology in Mineral Exploration

Beyond fossil fuels, paleontology is the scientific study of fossils that plays a crucial role in mineral exploration. Certain minerals are associated with specific geological environments and time periods, often reflected in the fossil record. By analyzing fossils, geologists can identify rock formations containing valuable resources like copper, uranium, and phosphate deposits. The presence of specific fossil assemblages can indicate favorable geological conditions for the formation and concentration of these minerals, guiding exploration efforts and resource assessment.

Paleontology and Environmental Management

Paleontology is the scientific study of fossils providing valuable insights into past climate change and environmental fluctuations. The fossil record contains a wealth of information about past ecosystems and their responses to environmental stresses. By studying past climate patterns and extinction events, paleontologists help us understand the potential impacts of current environmental changes and develop more effective conservation strategies. This information is crucial for informed decision-making in environmental management, resource conservation, and climate change mitigation.

Paleontology and the Construction Industry

Even the construction industry benefits from paleontology is the scientific study of fossils. Detailed understanding of geological formations, obtained through paleontological analysis, can be crucial for planning large-scale infrastructure projects. Identifying areas prone to landslides, subsidence, or other geological hazards can prevent costly delays and potential damage during construction. This information is crucial for ensuring the safety and stability of buildings, roads, and other infrastructure projects.

Technological Advancements in Paleontology

Recent technological advancements have revolutionized paleontological research. Advanced imaging techniques like micro-CT scanning allow scientists to study fossils in unprecedented detail without causing damage. Molecular techniques are enabling the analysis of ancient DNA from fossils, providing insights into the genetic relationships and evolutionary history of extinct organisms. These advancements are furthering our understanding of the fossil record and expanding the applications of paleontology in various industries.

Ethical Considerations in Paleontological Research

As paleontology is the scientific study of fossils, and increasingly crucial to various industries, ethical considerations must be carefully addressed. The responsible collection and preservation of fossils are paramount, ensuring the integrity of the scientific record and preventing damage to important archaeological sites. Moreover, proper consultation with indigenous communities and stakeholders is essential when conducting paleontological research in areas with cultural significance.

Conclusion: The Enduring Value of Paleontology

Paleontology is the scientific study of fossils, a field that continues to unveil remarkable insights into Earth's history and the evolution of life. Its applications extend far beyond academic research, providing invaluable information for various industries, including fossil fuels, minerals, environment, and construction. As technology advances, paleontology's role in these sectors will only grow, making it a critical discipline for understanding our planet and managing its resources responsibly. The continued exploration and preservation of the fossil record are essential for the advancement of scientific knowledge and the sustainable development of human society.

FAQs

1. What is the difference between paleontology and archaeology?
Paleontology focuses on ancient life, while archaeology studies human history and culture.

1. How are fossils dated? Several methods exist, including radiometric dating (using radioactive isotopes), biostratigraphy (using fossil assemblages), and magnetostratigraphy (using Earth's magnetic field reversals).

1. What are some of the most significant paleontological discoveries? The discovery of Archaeopteryx (a transitional fossil between dinosaurs and birds), Lucy (a famous hominin fossil), and the Burgess Shale (a rich deposit of Cambrian fossils) are just a few examples.

1. How does paleontology contribute to climate change research? By studying past climate changes recorded in fossils and sediments, paleontologists provide crucial context for understanding current climate change and its potential impacts.

1. What are the ethical considerations in fossil collecting? Ethical collecting involves respecting legal regulations, avoiding damage to sites, and ensuring proper preservation and documentation of fossils.

1. What are some career paths in paleontology? Paleontologists can work in museums, universities, government agencies, and the energy and mining industries.

1. How can I get involved in paleontology? Volunteer at museums, join paleontological societies, take related courses, and participate in

citizen science projects.

1. What is taphonomy? Taphonomy is the study of the processes that affect organisms from the time of death to discovery as fossils.

1. What is the role of paleontology in understanding biodiversity loss? Paleontology provides a baseline of past biodiversity levels, allowing scientists to compare current biodiversity with past levels and assess the severity of current loss.

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is the scientific study of fossils: Evolution Donald R. Prothero, 2017-08-22 Donald R. Prothero's *Evolution* is an entertaining and rigorous history of the transitional forms and series found in the fossil record. Its engaging narrative of scientific discovery and well-grounded analysis has led to the book's widespread adoption in courses that teach the nature and value of fossil evidence for evolution. *Evolution* tackles systematics and cladistics, rock dating, neo-Darwinism, and macroevolution. It includes extensive coverage of the primordial soup, invertebrate transitions, the development of the backbone, the reign of the dinosaurs, and the transformation from early hominid to modern human. The book also details the many alleged "missing links" in the fossil record, including some of the most recent discoveries that flesh out the fossil timeline and the evolutionary process. In this second edition, Prothero describes new transitional fossils from various periods, vividly depicting such bizarre creatures as the *Odontochelys*, or the "turtle on the half shell"; fossil snakes with legs; and the "Frogamander," a new example of amphibian transition. Prothero's discussion of intelligent design arguments includes more historical examples and careful examination of the "experiments" and observations that are exploited by creationists seeking to undermine sound science education. With new perspectives, Prothero reframes creationism as a case study in denialism and pseudoscience rather than a field with its own intellectual dynamism. The first edition was hailed as an exemplary exploration of the fossil evidence for evolution, and this second edition will be welcome in the libraries of scholars, teachers, and general readers who stand

up for sound science in this post-truth era.

is the scientific study of fossils: Where Do Fossils Come From? How Do We Find Them? Archaeology for Kids - Children's Biological Science of Fossils Books Bobo's Little Brainiac Books, 2016-05-25 Where do fossils come from and how can scientists learn about a different time from them? Let your child read and learn from the valuable information presented in this small book of big facts. The combination of pictures and texts make this book a highly effective learning resource for home and school use. Secure a copy today!

is the scientific study of fossils: Explorers of Deep Time Roy Plotnick, 2022-01-04 Paleontology is one of the most visible yet most misunderstood fields of science. Children dream of becoming paleontologists when they grow up. Museum visitors flock to exhibits on dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals. The media reports on fossil discoveries and new clues to mass extinctions. Nonetheless, misconceptions abound: paleontologists are assumed only to be interested in dinosaurs, and they are all too often imagined as bearded white men in battered cowboy hats. Roy Plotnick provides a behind-the-scenes look at paleontology as it exists today in all its complexity. He explores the field's aims, methods, and possibilities, with an emphasis on the compelling personal stories of the scientists who have made it a career. Paleontologists study the entire history of life on Earth; they do not only use hammers and chisels to unearth fossils but are just as likely to work with cutting-edge computing technology. Plotnick presents the big questions about life's history that drive paleontological research and shows why knowledge of Earth's past is essential to understanding present-day environmental crises. He introduces readers to the diverse group of people of all genders, races, and international backgrounds who make up the twenty-first-century paleontology community, foregrounding their perspectives and firsthand narratives. He also frankly discusses the many challenges that face the profession, with key takeaways for aspiring scientists. Candid and comprehensive, *Explorers of Deep Time* is essential reading for anyone curious about the everyday work of real-life paleontologists.

is the scientific study of fossils: Paleontology Derek Turner, 2011-04-28 In the wake of the paleobiological revolution of the 1970s and 1980s, paleontologists continue to investigate far-reaching questions about how evolution works. Many of those questions have a philosophical dimension. How is macroevolution related to evolutionary changes within populations? Is evolutionary history contingent? How much can we know about the causes of evolutionary trends? How do paleontologists read the patterns in the fossil record to learn about the underlying evolutionary processes? Derek Turner explores these and other questions, introducing the reader to exciting recent work in the philosophy of paleontology and to theoretical issues including punctuated equilibria and species selection. He also critically examines some of the major accomplishments and arguments of paleontologists of the last 40 years.

is the scientific study of fossils: Preparing Dinosaurs Caitlin Donahue Wylie, 2021-08-31 An investigation of the work and workers in fossil preparation labs reveals the often unacknowledged creativity and problem-solving on which scientists rely. Those awe-inspiring dinosaur skeletons on display in museums do not spring fully assembled from the earth. Technicians known as preparators have painstakingly removed the fossils from rock, repaired broken bones, and reconstructed missing pieces to create them. These specimens are foundational evidence for paleontologists, and yet the work and workers in fossil preparation labs go largely unacknowledged in publications and specimen records. In this book, Caitlin Wylie investigates the skilled labor of fossil preparators and argues for a new model of science that includes all research work and workers. Drawing on ethnographic observations and interviews, Wylie shows that the everyday work of fossil preparation requires creativity, problem-solving, and craft. She finds that preparators privilege their own skills over technology and that scientists prefer to rely on these trusted technicians rather than new technologies. Wylie examines how fossil preparators decide what fossils, and therefore dinosaurs, look like; how labor relations between interdependent yet hierarchically unequal collaborators influence scientific practice; how some museums display preparators at work behind glass, as if they were another exhibit; and how these workers learn their skills without formal training or scientific

credentials. The work of preparing specimens is a crucial component of scientific research, although it leaves few written traces. Wylie argues that the paleontology research community's social structure demonstrates how other sciences might incorporate non-scientists into research work, empowering and educating both scientists and nonscientists.

is the scientific study of fossils: Bringing Fossils to Life Donald R. Prothero, 2013-11-05 One of the leading textbooks in its field, *Bringing Fossils to Life* applies paleobiological principles to the fossil record while detailing the evolutionary history of major plant and animal phyla. It incorporates current research from biology, ecology, and population genetics, bridging the gap between purely theoretical paleobiological textbooks and those that describe only invertebrate paleobiology and that emphasize cataloguing live organisms instead of dead objects. For this third edition Donald R. Prothero has revised the art and research throughout, expanding the coverage of invertebrates and adding a discussion of new methodologies and a chapter on the origin and early evolution of life.

is the scientific study of fossils: Introduction to Paleobiology and the Fossil Record Michael J. Benton, David A. T. Harper, 2013-04-25 This book presents a comprehensive overview of the science of the history of life. Paleobiologists bring many analytical tools to bear in interpreting the fossil record and the book introduces the latest techniques, from multivariate investigations of biogeography and biostratigraphy to engineering analysis of dinosaur skulls, and from homeobox genes to cladistics. All the well-known fossil groups are included, including microfossils and invertebrates, but an important feature is the thorough coverage of plants, vertebrates and trace fossils together with discussion of the origins of both life and the metazoans. All key related subjects are introduced, such as systematics, ecology, evolution and development, stratigraphy and their roles in understanding where life came from and how it evolved and diversified. Unique features of the book are the numerous case studies from current research that lead students to the primary literature, analytical and mathematical explanations and tools, together with associated problem sets and practical schedules for instructors and students. "...any serious student of geology who does not pick this book off the shelf will be putting themselves at a huge disadvantage. The material may be complex, but the text is extremely accessible and well organized, and the book ought to be essential reading for palaeontologists at undergraduate, postgraduate and more advanced levels—both in Britain as well as in North America." Falcon-Lang, H., *Proc. Geol. Assoc.* 2010 "...this is an excellent introduction to palaeontology in general. It is well structured, accessibly written and pleasantly informativeI would recommend this as a standard reference text to all my students without hesitation." David Norman *Geol Mag* 2010 Companion website This book includes a companion website at: www.blackwellpublishing.com/paleobiology The website includes: · An ongoing database of additional Practical's prepared by the authors · Figures from the text for downloading · Useful links for each chapter · Updates from the authors

is the scientific study of fossils: Darwin's Fossils Adrian Lister, 2018-04-24 Reveals how Darwin's study of fossils shaped his scientific thinking and led to his development of the theory of evolution. *Darwin's Fossils* is an accessible account of Darwin's pioneering work on fossils, his adventures in South America, and his relationship with the scientific establishment. While Darwin's research on Galápagos finches is celebrated, his work on fossils is less well known. Yet he was the first to collect the remains of giant extinct South American mammals; he worked out how coral reefs and atolls formed; he excavated and explained marine fossils high in the Andes; and he discovered a fossil forest that now bears his name. All of this research was fundamental in leading Darwin to develop his revolutionary theory of evolution. This richly illustrated book brings Darwin's fossils, many of which survive in museums and institutions around the world, together for the first time. Including new photography of many of the fossils--which in recent years have enjoyed a surge of scientific interest--as well as superb line drawings produced in the nineteenth century and newly commissioned artists' reconstructions of the extinct animals as they are understood today, *Darwin's Fossils* reveals how Darwin's discoveries played a crucial role in the development of his groundbreaking ideas.

is the scientific study of fossils: Fossil Fungi Thomas N Taylor, Michael Krings, Edith L. Taylor, 2014-08-14 Fungi are ubiquitous in the world and responsible for driving the evolution and governing the sustainability of ecosystems now and in the past. Fossil Fungi is the first encyclopedic book devoted exclusively to fossil fungi and their activities through geologic time. The book begins with the historical context of research on fossil fungi (paleomycology), followed by how fungi are formed and studied as fossils, and their age. The next six chapters focus on the major lineages of fungi, arranging them in phylogenetic order and placing the fossils within a systematic framework. For each fossil the age and provenance are provided. Each chapter provides a detailed introduction to the living members of the group and a discussion of the fossils that are believed to belong in this group. The extensive bibliography (~ 2700 entries) includes papers on both extant and fossil fungi. Additional chapters include lichens, fungal spores, and the interactions of fungi with plants, animals, and the geosphere. The final chapter includes a discussion of fossil bacteria and other organisms that are fungal-like in appearance, and known from the fossil record. The book includes more than 475 illustrations, almost all in color, of fossil fungi, line drawings, and portraits of people, as well as a glossary of more than 700 mycological and paleontological terms that will be useful to both biologists and geoscientists. - First book devoted to the whole spectrum of the fossil record of fungi, ranging from Proterozoic fossils to the role of fungi in rock weathering - Detailed discussion of how fossil fungi are preserved and studied - Extensive bibliography with more than 2000 entries - Where possible, fungal fossils are placed in a modern systematic context - Each chapter within the systematic treatment of fungal lineages introduced with an easy-to-understand presentation of the main characters that define extant members - Extensive glossary of more than 700 entries that define both biological, geological, and mycological terminology

is the scientific study of fossils: Locked in Time Dean R. Lomax, Robert Nicholls, 2021-05-18 Fossils allow us to picture the forms of life that inhabited the earth eons ago. But we long to know more: how did these animals actually behave? We are fascinated by the daily lives of our fellow creatures—how they reproduce and raise their young, how they hunt their prey or elude their predators, and more. What would it be like to see prehistoric animals as they lived and breathed? From dinosaurs fighting to their deaths to elephant-sized burrowing ground sloths, this book takes readers on a global journey deep into the earth's past. Locked in Time showcases fifty of the most astonishing fossils ever found, brought together in five fascinating chapters that offer an unprecedented glimpse at the real-life behaviors of prehistoric animals. Dean R. Lomax examines the extraordinary direct evidence of fossils captured in the midst of everyday action, such as dinosaurs sitting on their eggs like birds, Jurassic flies preserved while mating, a T. rex infected by parasites. Each fossil, he reveals, tells a unique story about prehistoric life. Many recall behaviors typical of animals familiar to us today, evoking the chain of evolution that links all living things to their distant ancestors. Locked in Time allows us to see that fossils are not just inanimate objects: they can record the life stories of creatures as fully alive as any today. Striking and scientifically rigorous illustrations by renowned paleoartist Bob Nicholls bring these breathtaking moments to life.

is the scientific study of fossils: Bone Sharps, Cowboys, and Thunder Lizards Jim Ottaviani, 2005 Contains a graphic novel that presents a fictionalized historical tale of two late-nineteenth century scientists who fight over the discovery of dinosaur bones.

is the scientific study of fossils: Fossil Insects David Penney, James E Jepson, 2014-07-31 Palaeoentomology represents the interface between two huge scientific disciplines: palaeontology – the study of fossils, and entomology – the study of insects. However, fossils rarely feature extensively in books on insects, and likewise, insects rarely feature in books about fossils. Similarly, college or university palaeontology courses rarely have an entomological component and entomology courses do not usually consider the fossil record of insects in any detail. This is not due to a lack of insect fossils. The fossil record of insects is incredibly diverse in terms of taxonomic scope, age range (Devonian to Recent), mode of preservation (amber and rock) and geographical distribution (fossil insects have been recorded from all continents, including Antarctica). In this book the authors aim to help bridge the palaeontology-entomology gap by providing a broadly accessible introduction to

some of the best preserved fossil insects from a wide range of deposits from around the globe, many of which are beautifully illustrated by colour photographs. Also covered are insect behaviour and ecology in the fossil record, sub-fossil insects, trace fossils and insect species longevity. Just as insects are useful as ecological indicators today, the same can be expected to be true of the past. Such applications of the insect fossil record are briefly discussed. It is hoped that this book will encourage a few future researchers to enter the fascinating realm of palaeoentomology and to this end there is a section on how to become a palaeoentomologist. However, it is aimed at a much broader audience – those with an interest in fossils and/or insects in general, who will no doubt marvel at the diversity and excellent preservation of the fossils illustrated.

is the scientific study of fossils: Paleontologists Tom Greve, 2019-03-27 The Earth buries its past. Living things that die and then slowly become part of the Earth are called fossils. This is where the skills of a paleontologist come into play. Their job is to find fossils and study them in order to make sense of what was going on here on Earth for billions of years before there were ever human beings. Learn all about the fossil record, the amazing discoveries and where they were found, and what it takes to become one of these amazing scientists. Put on your gloves and get ready to dig into the world of paleontology! This title will allow students to identify evidence from patterns in rock formations and fossils in rock layers to identify past life of animals or human existence. • Text based questions • Content sidebars • Diagrams • Bold keywords with phonetic glossary

is the scientific study of fossils: Basic Palaeontology Michael J. Benton, D. A. T. Harper, 1997 Palaeontology, a fundamental topic in geology and evolutionary biology, has undergone exciting and rapid change in recent years. Contemporary debates on mass extinctions and the origin of life have had profound implications for our understanding of how life evolved. Basic Palaeontology is a comprehensive and accessible introduction to palaeontology. With in-depth analysis of basic principles and all the main fossil groups, this fully illustrated text presents new and exciting research on the origin and history of life. The text focuses on traditional topics such as marine invertebrate palaeontology and biostratigraphy, but also provides unique and unparalleled taxonomic coverage from microfossils to plants and vertebrates. Key Features include: - Covers important recent developments in macroevolution and mass extinctions - A strong focus on a statistical and quantitative approach, emphasising the vital importance of both applications and theory - Full coverage of the evolution of vertebrates and plants - Over 600 highly detailed illustrations - An accessible format with extensive boxed material and bullet points Basic Palaeontology is essential reading for undergraduate students of geology, environmental science and biology, taking courses in palaeontology, palaeobiology, palaeoecology or evolution, and will also be of interest to all those who have an interest in the origin of life and human evolution. Michael J Benton is a Reader in the Department of Geology, University of Bristol, UK. David A T Harper is a Lecturer in Geology at the Department of Geology, University College Galway, Ireland.

is the scientific study of fossils: Dinosaurs Without Bones Anthony J. Martin, 2021-07-13 Bubbles over with the joy of scientific discovery as he shares his natural enthusiasm for the blend of sleuthing and imagination.—Publishers Weekly, starred review What if we woke up one morning all of the dinosaur bones in the world were gone? How would we know these iconic animals had a 165-million year history on earth, and had adapted to all land-based environments from pole to pole? What clues would be left to discern not only their presence, but also to learn about their sex lives, raising of young, social lives, combat, and who ate who? What would it take for us to know how fast dinosaurs moved, whether they lived underground, climbed trees, or went for a swim? Welcome to the world of ichnology, the study of traces and trace fossils – such as tracks, trails, burrows, nests, toothmarks, and other vestiges of behavior – and how through these remarkable clues, we can explore and intuit the rich and complicated lives of dinosaurs. With a unique, detective-like approach, interpreting the forensic clues of these long-extinct animals that leave a much richer legacy than bones, Martin brings the wild world of the Mesozoic to life for the 21st century reader.

is the scientific study of fossils: The Dinosaur Artist Paige Williams, 2018-09-11 In this 2018 New York Times Notable Book, Paige Williams does for fossils what Susan Orlean did for orchids

(Book Riot) in her account of one Florida man's attempt to sell a dinosaur skeleton from Mongolia--a story steeped in natural history, human nature, commerce, crime, science, and politics (Rebecca Skloot). In 2012, a New York auction catalogue boasted an unusual offering: a superb Tyrannosaurus skeleton. In fact, Lot 49135 consisted of a nearly complete T. bataar, a close cousin to the most famous animal that ever lived. The fossils now on display in a Manhattan event space had been unearthed in Mongolia, more than 6,000 miles away. At eight-feet high and 24 feet long, the specimen was spectacular, and when the gavel sounded the winning bid was over \$1 million. Eric Prokopi, a thirty-eight-year-old Floridian, was the man who had brought this extraordinary skeleton to market. A onetime swimmer who spent his teenage years diving for shark teeth, Prokopi's singular obsession with fossils fueled a thriving business hunting, preparing, and selling specimens, to clients ranging from natural history museums to avid private collectors like actor Leonardo DiCaprio. But there was a problem. This time, facing financial strain, had Prokopi gone too far? As the T. bataar went to auction, a network of paleontologists alerted the government of Mongolia to the eye-catching lot. As an international custody battle ensued, Prokopi watched as his own world unraveled. In the tradition of *The Orchid Thief*, *The Dinosaur Artist* is a stunning work of narrative journalism about humans' relationship with natural history and a seemingly intractable conflict between science and commerce. A story that stretches from Florida's Land O' Lakes to the Gobi Desert, *The Dinosaur Artist* illuminates the history of fossil collecting--a murky, sometimes risky business, populated by eccentrics and obsessives, where the lines between poacher and hunter, collector and smuggler, enthusiast and opportunist, can easily blur. In her first book, Paige Williams has given readers an irresistible story that spans continents, cultures, and millennia as she examines the question of who, ultimately, owns the past.

is the scientific study of fossils: Why Dinosaurs Matter Kenneth Lacovara, 2017-09-19 What can long-dead dinosaurs teach us about our future? Plenty, according to paleontologist Kenneth Lacovara, who has discovered some of the largest creatures to ever walk the Earth. By tapping into the ubiquitous wonder that dinosaurs inspire, Lacovara weaves together the stories of our geological awakening, of humanity's epic struggle to understand the nature of deep time, the meaning of fossils, and our own place on the vast and bountiful tree of life. Go on a journey--back to when dinosaurs ruled the Earth--to discover how dinosaurs achieved feats unparalleled by any other group of animals. Learn the secrets of how paleontologists find fossils, and explore quirky, but profound questions, such as: Is a penguin a dinosaur? And, how are the tiny arms of T. rex the key to its power and ferocity? In this revealing book, Lacovara offers the latest ideas about the shocking and calamitous death of the dinosaurs and ties their vulnerabilities to our own. *Why Dinosaurs Matter* is compelling and engaging--a great reminder that our place on this planet is both precarious and potentially fleeting. "As we move into an uncertain environmental future, it has never been more important to understand the past."

is the scientific study of fossils: Curious About Fossils Kate Waters, 2016-03-01 Dig into this photo-packed Penguin-Smithsonian book about fossils--and find out what was going on in our world. Aren't you curious about what Earth was like long ago? What creatures lived before us? What happened to the dinosaurs? *Curious about Fossils* explains why and where fossils form and looks at the colorful lives and important discoveries of some of the great early fossil hunters and collectors, including Mary Anning who unearthed the first ichthyosaur skeleton; Richard Owen who coined the word dinosaur; and Barnum Brown, who discovered the first remains of a T-rex. Then the adventure continues into modern times, where scientists on fossil hunts in places like North Dakota's Hell Creek Formation use computers and other technology to dig up the fossilized bones, teeth, and even poop that provide clues to the past. A must read for every kid who's ever collected a shark tooth or trilobite!

is the scientific study of fossils: Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science National Academy of Sciences, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Board on Science Education, Working Group on Teaching Evolution, 1998-05-06 Today many school students are shielded from one of the most important concepts in modern science: evolution. In engaging and

conversational style, *Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science* provides a well-structured framework for understanding and teaching evolution. Written for teachers, parents, and community officials as well as scientists and educators, this book describes how evolution reveals both the great diversity and similarity among the Earth's organisms; it explores how scientists approach the question of evolution; and it illustrates the nature of science as a way of knowing about the natural world. In addition, the book provides answers to frequently asked questions to help readers understand many of the issues and misconceptions about evolution. The book includes sample activities for teaching about evolution and the nature of science. For example, the book includes activities that investigate fossil footprints and population growth that teachers of science can use to introduce principles of evolution. Background information, materials, and step-by-step presentations are provided for each activity. In addition, this volume: Presents the evidence for evolution, including how evolution can be observed today. Explains the nature of science through a variety of examples. Describes how science differs from other human endeavors and why evolution is one of the best avenues for helping students understand this distinction. Answers frequently asked questions about evolution. *Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science* builds on the 1996 National Science Education Standards released by the National Research Council and offers detailed guidance on how to evaluate and choose instructional materials that support the standards. Comprehensive and practical, this book brings one of today's educational challenges into focus in a balanced and reasoned discussion. It will be of special interest to teachers of science, school administrators, and interested members of the community.

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palaeontologists who were perusing a personal interest rather than a career. The problems of maintaining research facilities in universities, especially in the modern era, are described and reveal a noticeable absence of a national UK strategy to preserve centres of excellence in an avowedly specialist area. Accounts of some of the pioneers demonstrate the importance of collaboration between taxonomists and illustrators. The importance of palaeobotany in the rise of geoconservation is outlined, as well as the significant and influential role of women in the discipline. Although this volume has a predominantly UK focus, two very interesting studies outline the history of palaeobotanical work in Argentina and China.

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at the foot of the Altai Mountains, encountered the skeletons of Protoceratops and other dinosaurs that littered the ground. Like their modern counterparts, the ancient fossil hunters collected and measured impressive petrified remains and displayed them in temples and museums; they attempted to reconstruct the appearance of these prehistoric creatures and to explain their extinction. Long thought to be fantasy, the remarkably detailed and perceptive Greek and Roman accounts of giant bone finds were actually based on solid paleontological facts. By reading these neglected narratives for the first time in the light of modern scientific discoveries, Adrienne Mayor illuminates a lost world of ancient paleontology.

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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.

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