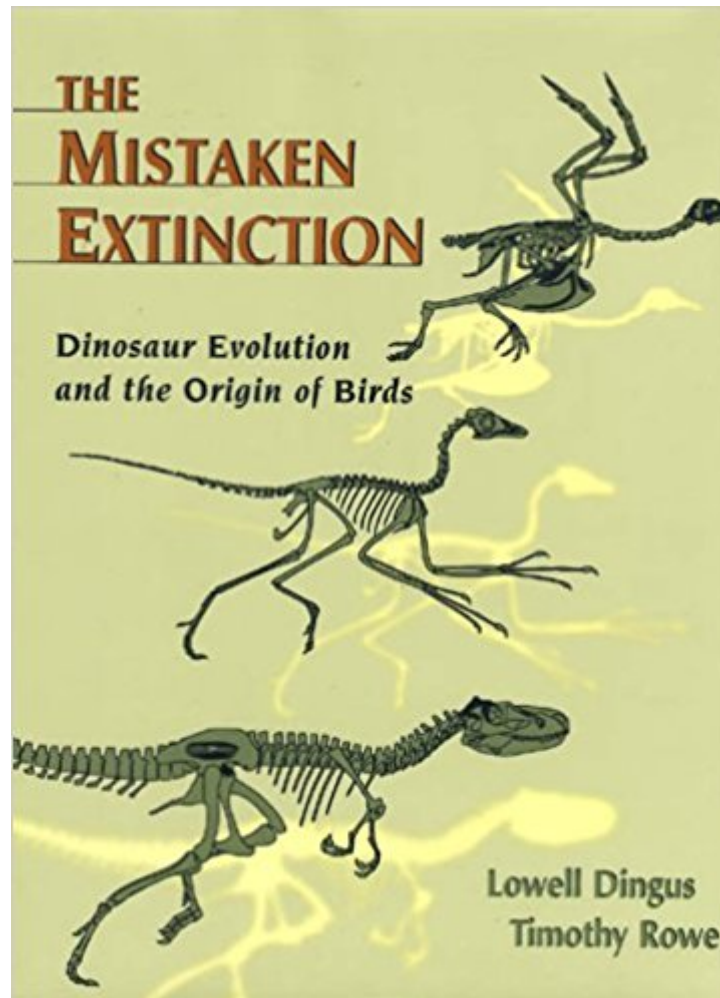




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# Mistaken Extinction: Dinosaur Evolution And The Origin Of Birds



## Synopsis

Two crackerjack paleontologists take readers on a brisk tour of the leading theories about the dinosaurs' disappearance. An epic tale of beautiful and terrible beasts and explosions that block out the sun, *The Mistaken Extinction* is a 65-million-year-old evolutionary murder mystery with a fascination that has yet to die out. 300 illustrations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Did the dinosaurs disappear, or did they merely take flight? In *The Mistaken Extinction*, two eminent paleontologists make a case for the continued existence of dinosaurs, at least in the form of some relatively diminutive descendants: birds. To prove their point, Lowell Dingus and Timothy Rowe first review leading theories about the dinosaurs' extinction, pointing to the shortcomings of each.

Instead of dying out, Dingus and Rowe write, the dinosaurs merely evolved into another form. For skeptics troubled by such a direct link between their backyard blue jay and the lumbering T. rex, the authors point to problems with the current Linnean system of classifying life. Under a rival system known as cladistics, they contend that it's possible to identify the anatomical characteristics shared by birds and dinosaurs. It's an intriguing hypothesis, and one open to considerable debate. Either way, this beautifully illustrated and admirably comprehensive volume has much to offer birders and dinosaur buffs alike.

For over a century, scientists have inquired into the cause of dinosaur extinction. Using the latest information and discoveries, noted paleontologists Dingus and Rowe suggest that all dinosaurs

didn't become extinct at the K-T boundary of geologic time, destroyed by volcanic eruptions or a gigantic comet impact, as argued in Walter Alvarez's *T. Rex and the Crater of Doom* (LJ 6/15/97); instead, they evolved into birds. Reviewing past theories and findings, the authors use evidence from rock and fossil records to lend credence to their conclusions. In Part 1, they discuss two accepted scenarios: asteroid impacts vs. natural, more gradual events leading to the extinction of dinosaurs. Part 2 examines dinosaur evolution in detail, introducing the major lineages of dinosaurs. Numerous cladistic diagrams and anatomical illustrations accompany their text. Combining the details of a textbook with the narrative of a scientific detective story, this is an exceptional contribution to the study of dinosaur extinction and the implications for our own future. Highly recommended for academic libraries and larger public libraries. ?Gloria Maxwell, Kansas City P.L., Kan. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

After reading and viewing much more colorful dinosaur books this one seemed somewhat dry and gray at first. However it has turned out to be a very interesting tome. Much of the book is about the great extinction of most of the dinosaurs 68 million years ago after evolving for 150 million years. But the latter part is about how birds are dinosaurs, so there was no extinction of all of the dinosaurs. As with most dinosaur books the nomenclature is thick. And this book introduces and uses a newer nomenclature that follows genealogy and evolutionary methods of identification and naming. You won't look at birds the same way after reading this book. But you may forget some of their scientific names.

Extrodinary treatise! Well researched and supported by fossil record and comparative anatomy. Leaves little to doubt that birds are, indeed, the last of the dinosaurs. \Well written and superbly illustrated.

Strikes the right balance--not some populist claptrap and not as esoteric as many books aimed at professional paleontologists. (Be prepared in those texts to know the names of hundreds of different bones and be able to identify them.) For a well-read, non-professional paleontologist this book is a godsend.

Book fully met expectations. Thank you.

I first saw this book at the local library today. I ordered my own copy today. It is a challenging book to

read; perhaps the audience is the first year university student. I bought it to share with my 10-year-old granddaughter. That's how good this book is. This is a first-person account by two UC-Berkeley scholars. If I read this correctly, their offices, back in the late 1970s, were one floor below those of Luis Alvarez, the Nobel-laureate in physics; and, his son, Walter, a Professor in the Department of Geology and Geophysics. In this first-person account, the authors describe the genesis of the dinosaur-to-bird theory, much like James Watson did with his first-person account of DNA. The history of biology is incredible. Of course, the geology is wonderful. The phylogenetic maps are exquisite. There is even a bit of physics (zircon: uranium to lead dating). This book simply has it all for someone interested in all the sciences. About the only thing lacking is an introduction to calculus. I've been studying biology and chemistry since 1965 and continue to read as much as I can. Without question, this may be the best book for a general overview of all the sciences. It's a sleeper: one might think it is simply another book on dinosaurs. This is definitely not true. This is simply a very, very good book.

This is a comprehensive approach to linking dinosaurs and birds. The abundance of information is overwhelming evidence that the origin of birds rests in the fossils of theropods.

I'm the type of person who rarely reads books for fun. Most of what I read is for my work or on rare occasions I'll grab a book at the airport if I have a long flight. Half the time I'll get bored with it and won't finish it. I'm not even sure how this book ended up on my shelf but I grabbed it about a week ago when I had to go to the hospital and wait for my mother who was having an operation. I literally had a hard time putting it down. Of course it's not fiction but in some ways it reads like fiction in that it tells a story. At times it presents itself as a murder mystery; "What killed the dinosaurs?". Even though the outcome is given away by the title, it's still a fascinating story. The book is divided into two parts. The first part covers various theories about the cause of the death of the dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous. The second part in some ways refutes the first part by coming to the conclusion that dinosaurs never really died at all because birds are part of the dinosaur family. I know this is still somewhat of a contentious debate among some, but the book contains some pretty convincing evidence. It's a bit technical at times but you can always get the general idea of what the author is trying to convey. Even though this book is chiefly about dinosaurs and birds it covers a lot of stuff not directly related to the main topic but interesting nevertheless. For instance I did not know about the Phylogenetic system of classification before I read it. This book explains it quite well so that someone like me, who is not well versed in biology can easily understand it.

This book rocked so hard it isn't even funny!! I have loved dinosaurs ever since I was a youngster, and still find myself quite fond of those wacky beasts. This book delivers when it comes to dinos. It basically includes two parts: one concerned with the theories of dino extinction (the meteorite-impact hypothesis is given particular attention-perhaps because one of the authors was involved in research on this hypothesis), the other with dino evolution into birds. Both are written by experts, and more than that they are experts who know how to write in an engaging and easy to understand fashion that the non-expert can understand and appreciate. The prose made the book hard to put down, and the pictures of the biological poetry we call dinosaurs are enough to bring tears to the true dinosaur lovers eyes. So if you like dinosaurs, geology, or I would even say science in general, or are just a curious soul looking for new things to learn I highly recommend this book.

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