
Preface to the second edition

The idea behind this book is much as it was for the first edition: to use dinosaurs as an attractive entrée into aspects of natural history and scientific inquiry. Here then is a cohesive take on Dinosauria, with emphasis on the extinct rather than the extant members of the group. We remain passionately convinced that dinosaurs – when properly understood – illuminate not only the past but the present.

Belying their popular persona, dinosaurs are not about binomial Linnaean Latin litinies nor moribund minutiae. Instead, the study of dinosaurs is blessed by all the intellectual and creative opportunities afforded by science. An explicitly phylogenetic approach, as well as the presentation of multiple viewpoints, offers readers a sense of what is (and what is not) possible using scientific inquiry. Interested students and amateurs may use the book as a means of developing sophistication in not only dinosaurs, but also in the logic of scientific discovery.

For us the study of dinosaurs is all about the history of life and of the earth, the nature of nature, and, ultimately, who we are.

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