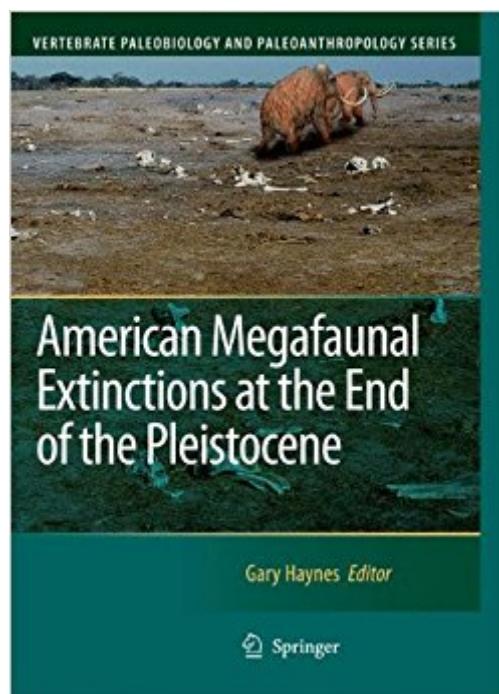


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American Megafaunal Extinctions At The End Of The Pleistocene (Vertebrate Paleobiology And Paleoanthropology)



Synopsis

The volume contains summaries of facts, theories, and unsolved problems pertaining to the unexplained extinction of dozens of genera of mostly large terrestrial mammals, which occurred ca. 13,000 calendar years ago in North America and about 1,000 years later in South America. Another equally mysterious wave of extinctions affected large Caribbean islands around 5,000 years ago. The coupling of these extinctions with the earliest appearance of human beings has led to the suggestion that foraging humans are to blame, although major climatic shifts were also taking place in the Americas during some of the extinctions. The last published volume with similar (but not identical) themes -- *Extinctions in Near Time* -- appeared in 1999; since then a great deal of innovative, exciting new research has been done but has not yet been compiled and summarized. Different chapters in this volume provide in-depth resumés of the chronology of the extinctions in North and South America, the possible insights into animal ecology provided by studies of stable isotopes and anatomical/physiological characteristics such as growth increments in mammoth and mastodont tusks, the clues from taphonomic research about large-mammal biology, the applications of dating methods to the extinctions debate, and archeological controversies concerning human hunting of large mammals.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hi. This book is an academic-level book, and not necessarily for beginners to the subject. The book

also consists of research papers, written by a principal author and by other authors, who worked together to present a unifying theme. I have some mixed viewpoints on this book, but overall this book is quite all right. First, the principal author is an old theorist on the peopling of the Americas in which the two continents were settled from a single migration and settled very rapidly (despite that rapid migrations never took place in human or hominid history), whereas I am a new theorist on the peopling of the Americas in which the two continents were settled slowly from multiple migrations from different origins and within different timeframes. However, this old theory was not heavily discussed (though lightly so) because this book involves a discussion on what happened to much of the megafauna of the Americas, and why they went extinct. The principal author advocates the overkill theory whereas I advocate that there was a bolide-impact-related megadisaster or some other kind of megadisaster (often referred as the overgrill theory) that played a major hand in the extinctions of much of the North American (and at least some South American) megafauna. Yet, I also advocate that remaining surviving megafauna were overhunted by the surviving paleoamerindians to extinction, and thanks to this book, there is compelling evidence that overkill was indeed involved in the Pleistocene-Holocene megafaunal extinctions at least to an extent, as unfortunate as it was. All of the evidence for the overkill theory was well put and discussed in this book. That is why I gave this book three stars, even though I do not advocate all that the principal author proposes.

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