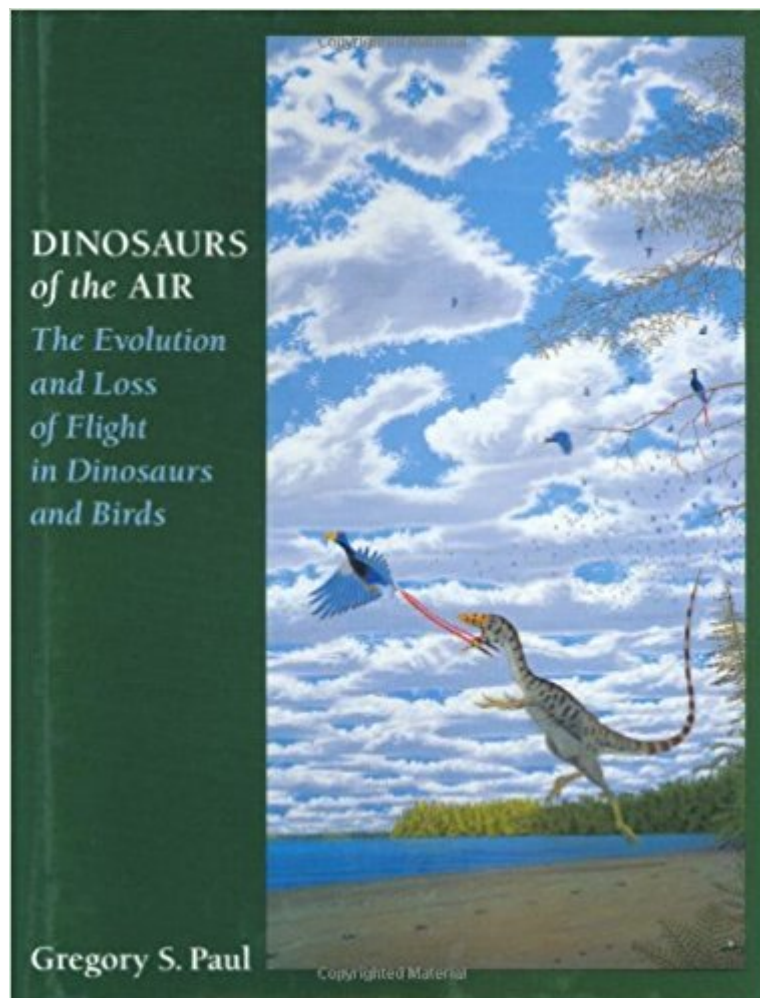




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Dinosaurs Of The Air: The Evolution And Loss Of Flight In Dinosaurs And Birds



Synopsis

Dinosaurs of the Air: The Evolution and Loss of Flight in Dinosaurs and Birds presents the most recent work of renowned evolutionary scientist and dinosaur illustrator Gregory Paul. *Dinosaurs of the Air* synthesizes the growing body of evidence which suggests that modern-day birds have evolved from theropod dinosaurs of prehistoric times. Paul argues provocatively for the idea that the ancestor-descendant relationship between the dinosaurs and birds can on occasion be reversed, and that many dinosaurs were secondarily flightless descendants of creatures we would regard as birds. Controversial and comprehensive, *Dinosaurs of the Air* also offers new, firsthand interpretations of major fossils; a balanced, rewarding discussion of the ways we think flight may have evolved (comparing "ground up" and "trees down" scenarios); a close look at the famous urvogel *Archaeopteryx*, discussing what it can and cannot tell us about bird origins; and in-depth analyses of bird and theropod phylogenetics. Full of rich detail for the specialist but accessible to the intelligent lay reader, the book includes the author's own stunning illustrations and a technical appendix which provides information, for example, on body mass/wing dimension relationships and avian/dinosaurian metabolics.

Book Information

Hardcover: 472 pages

Publisher: Johns Hopkins University Press; First Edition edition (April 1, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801867630

ISBN-13: 978-0801867637

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 1.4 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,357,875 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #92 in Â Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Paleontology > Vertebrate #328 in Â Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Dinosaurs #507 in Â Books > Science & Math > Evolution > Organic

Customer Reviews

This book discusses in detail the evolution of birds from earlier dinosaurs. Even more interestingly though is its premise that as well as the fact that birds are dinosaurs it may also be that some non-avian dinosaurs could be seen as neoflightless birds. Examples of these "dino-birds" include deinonychosaurs, oviraptorosaurs, therizinosaurids and possibly also alvarezsaurids and

ornithomimosaur. Things like tyrannosaurs and ornitholestids are also considered as candidates for secondarily flightless dinosaurs, though the author admits neoflightlessness is far less likely in these groups. I think the idea certain dinosaurs besides the birds may come from flying origins makes sense, especially in the context of how we now have some fairly good evidence for flight capabilities in a number of dinosaurs generally considered "non-avian" (most notably among the dromaeosaurs). Indeed, the line between birds and other dinosaurs is quite blurred. The book is well researched and presents plenty of evidence to back up its arguments. It does a good job of shattering still existing misconceptions about birds having non-dinosaurian ancestry and shows how the main arguments now are not really whether or not birds came from dinosaurs, but rather how and when this occurred and whether or not flight evolved more than once among the dinosaurs. As well as the interesting information of flight in birds and other dinosaurs, the book discusses other interesting issues as well. For example, there is one part where the book shows some of the problems with the notion that an asteroid alone caused the mass extinction at the end of the Cretaceous, and shows how it is far more likely the asteroid was but a single contributing factor among many. There are a few things in the book I disagree with.

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