



Prehistoric Life: The Definitive Visual History of Life on Earth

By DK



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With an extensive catalog at its heart, *Prehistoric Life* profiles hundreds of fascinating species in incredible detail. The story starts in earnest 3.8 billion years ago, with the earliest-known form of life on Earth, a bacteria that still exists today, and journeys through action-packed millennia, charting the appearance of new life forms as well as devastating extinction events. Of course, the ever-popular and endlessly intriguing dinosaurs feature large, but *Prehistoric Life* gives you the whole picture, and the plants, invertebrates, amphibians, birds, reptiles, and mammals that are the ancestors of today's species also populate its pages, making this book unprecedented in its coverage of prehistory. Specially commissioned artworks use cutting-edge technology to render species in breathtakingly realistic fashion, with astonishing images of prehistoric remains, such as skeletons and fossils, to complete the story. To put all the evidence in context, the concept of geological time is explored, as is the classification of species and how the evidence for their evolution is preserved and can be deciphered.



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Editorial Review

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Condensing millions of years of life on earth into a 512-page single-volume encyclopedia, this ambitious work presents earth's history from its formation through the Mesolithic period (Middle Stone Age). Divided into three sections, Prehistoric Life begins with a brief look at "Young Earth." Two-page spreads examine topics such as plate tectonics, fossils, and the geological timescale. The bulk of the volume discusses "Life on Earth" and is divided by era from the Archean through the Quaternary. Each section introduces the plants, invertebrates, and vertebrates (as applicable) representative of that time period. The final section delves into "The Rise of the Humans" and discusses human relatives, ancestors, origins, and migration patterns. Although a wealth of scientific information is provided, the illustrative material is the star of this volume. The collection of full-color photographs of fossils (ranging from spore to dinosaur) and skeletons show amazing detail and clarity. Visitors to a natural history museum could not explore the number of examples contained here. Where actual photographs are obviously not available, DK commissioned 3-D images, "modeled using scientific research" to bring life-forms to the page for readers. Photographs and other images are accompanied by information about the creature such as name, group, date, and location. Scaled images (of either a thumb, a hand, or a human) are used to help readers visualize actual sizes. Geared to adults, this work will find popularity with science enthusiasts and browsers alike. Because of the relatively low cost, public libraries will likely want more than one copy. High schools with a strong science program will want to consider purchase for their library or science department. --Shauna Yusko

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Paul McKinney:

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