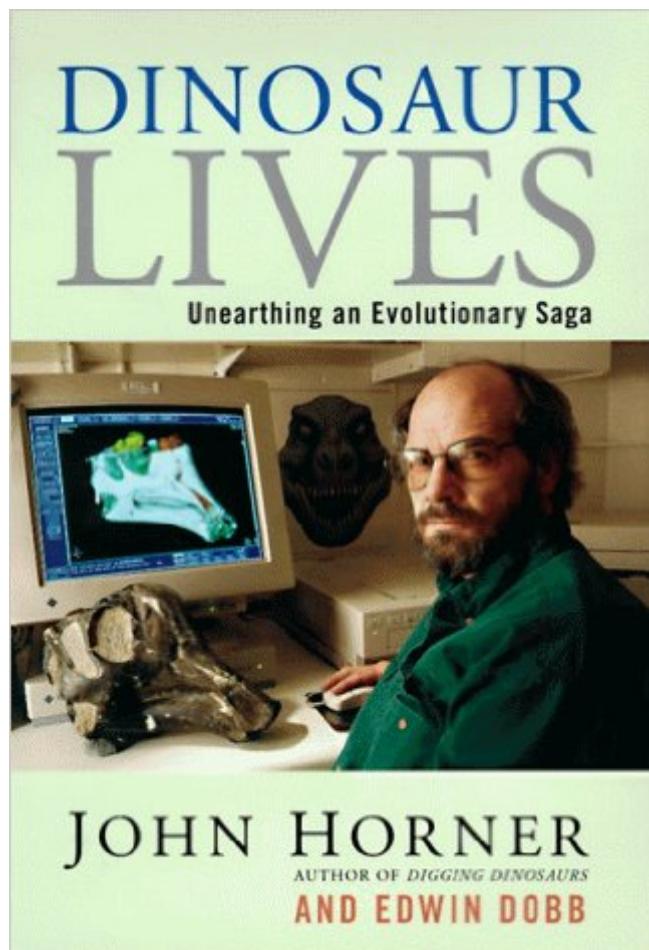


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# Dinosaur Lives: Unearthing An Evolutionary Saga



## **Synopsis**

From the purple phenomenon that is Barney to the blockbuster draw of Jurassic Park, dinosaurs still rule the earth. Dinosaur Lives explores the appeal that dinosaurs have for us, explains the latest scientific research and then takes us into their prehistoric world. As technical adviser for both Jurassic Park and The Lost World, John Horner has the perfect vantage point for a discussion of dinosaurs' status as pop icons. As the paleontologist whose discoveries fundamentally changed our perceptions of dinosaurs, he can take us from the far-flung digs to the state-of-the-art labs where MRI scans, DNA testing and other new technologies are generating an explosion of new information about dinosaurs, from what sort of noises they made to how smart they were. In the final section of the book, Horner offers a sweeping, detailed and largely unprecedented vision of the world 709 million years ago -- how dinosaurs evolved, what they ate, how they raised their young, their social structure, their sex lives and more. With his enormously engaging voice and intimate knowledge of dinosaurs, Horner is sure to revolutionize the way we think about dinosaurs yet again. Dinosaur Lives is destined to be another classic.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Dinosaur Lives introduces the lay reader (that would be you and me) to a number of exciting ideas. The book provides us with an update to Horner's field work since he wrote "Digging Dinosaurs," but it also delves deeper into some of the bigger ideas concerning dinosaurs. A large portion of the book is devoted to speculation about the behavior of dinosaurs, especially the raising of young and herd/pack associations. What interested me most, however, is Horner's deconstruction of Linnean taxonomy, and the description of cladistics as a more powerful tool to look at relationships between

living and extinct creatures. For those of us raised on the idea of speciation, this is powerful stuff. You may find, as I did, that light bulbs start popping in your head as you realize that the very way you think about a subject can severely limit your ability to perceive new ideas. If all this sounds a bit airy-fairy, Horner does a much better job than I can here explaining some pretty complex stuff in a very simple way. My only complaints about the book are that Horner sometimes can be a bit wordy while telling us what he is about to tell us. I could have used a bit more technical detail in some of his descriptions, and certainly the illustrations should have been more complete. These are minor complaints, however. This is a fascinating book for anyone who likes thinking about dinosaurs, and the endless cycles of life. You don't need to have any prior knowledge to thoroughly enjoy this book.

John Horner presents a very clear picture of what it means to do field work in paleontology. The reader gets a good taste of what it would be like to work on a dig, including the scientific way of looking at things, the down side of heat and hard work, the excitement of discovery, the fun and frustration of trying to figure out how to get a sample safely out of the ground and transported to a waiting vehicle. Horner's enthusiasm and love of his subject come through clearly, but it was also nice to find he is still flexible in his ideas. Revision of ideas, as new facts come to light, is the way good science should work, but often doesn't. This is good science, carefully presenting the evidence that caused Horner to revise his ideas, and build a new picture of some dinosaur behavior and of evolutionary events. Even the amateur enthusiast can learn from his clear explanations and see the relationships over distance and time of some of the well known dinosaur bearing formations like Judith River and Hell Creek. I kept referring back to his diagram as I read, and found it easy to picture the changing environment and the evolutionary pressures brought to bear on his cast of characters. The final discussion of scientific versus commercial imperatives is important, and he is not one-eyed enough to lambast all commercial and amateur work.

This book is not only about dinosaurs. It is also about us. Where we come from, where we are going... There are no answers in the book, but at least you will find a lot of honest thought.

The book revealed some interesting new directions and aims for one of the leading Palaeontologists of the last few decades. It was more diffuse and less narrative based than *Digging Dinosaurs*, which makes it a less coherent read, but interesting nevertheless.

Mr. Horner has made an extraordinary accomplishment with 'Diggin Dinosaurs,' as it is able to

present relative information regarding the topic at hand in a manner to be easily read by the masses and hold the reader's attention. His ability to stimulate the imagination with his illustrative speech and diction is quite amazing, as is his ability to distill the necessary information from the vast amounts of data that is available for analysis. An amazing breakthrough to be certain.

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