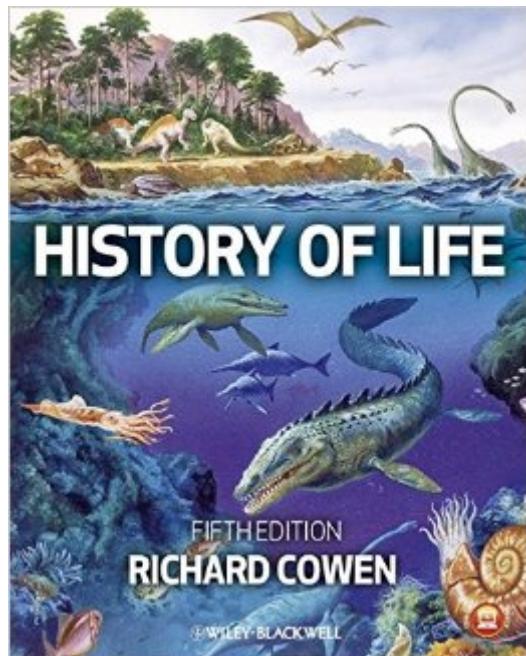


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# History Of Life



## **Synopsis**

This text is designed for students and anyone else with an interest in the history of life on our planet. The author describes the biological evolution of Earth's organisms, and reconstructs their adaptations to the life they led, and the ecology and environment in which they functioned. On the grand scale, Earth is a constantly changing planet, continually presenting organisms with challenges. Changing geography, climate, atmosphere, oceanic and land environments set a stage in which organisms interact with their environments and one another, with evolutionary change an inevitable result. The organisms themselves in turn can change global environments: oxygen in our atmosphere is all produced by photosynthesis, for example. The interplay between a changing Earth and its evolving organisms is the underlying theme of the book. The book has a dedicated website which explores additional enriching information and discussion, and provides or points to the art for the book and many other images useful for teaching. See: [www.wiley.com/go/cowen/historyoflife](http://www.wiley.com/go/cowen/historyoflife).

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Clearly presented review of the current consensus on the History of Life. Don't get this one if you want to hear about any controversial theories, which I suppose is actually good for an entry level text book. When he has to make a choice between conflicting points of view, he mentions it briefly so you can follow up if you like. He briefly discusses eukaryote hybridization without attribution to Margulis -- perhaps this is no longer controversial? I don't remember any mention of major players

in the development of the consensus with the exception of Darwin himself. I think it might be better to name a few more of the key players briefly -- maybe they are mentioned in the notes or extensive additional reading suggestions, which I skipped. It's a very clear book with appropriate illustrations (both drawings and photos) which I found a pleasure to read as a layperson. As another reviewer mentioned, the book is highly anthropocentric, with fully 2/3 of the chapters related to chordates. As the other reviewer said, this is more or less to be expected. It does seem a shame that more attention isn't paid to the groups that by far outnumber animals with backbones in both absolute count and species diversity. However, even with the anthropocentric focus, Cowen's almost religious misanthropy became jarring towards the end of the book. The last several chapters document at depth our ancestors' killing all the poor neanderthals (with bigger brains than us, too!) and other Homo species and killing all the poor huge and cuddly giant sloths and other cute animals.

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