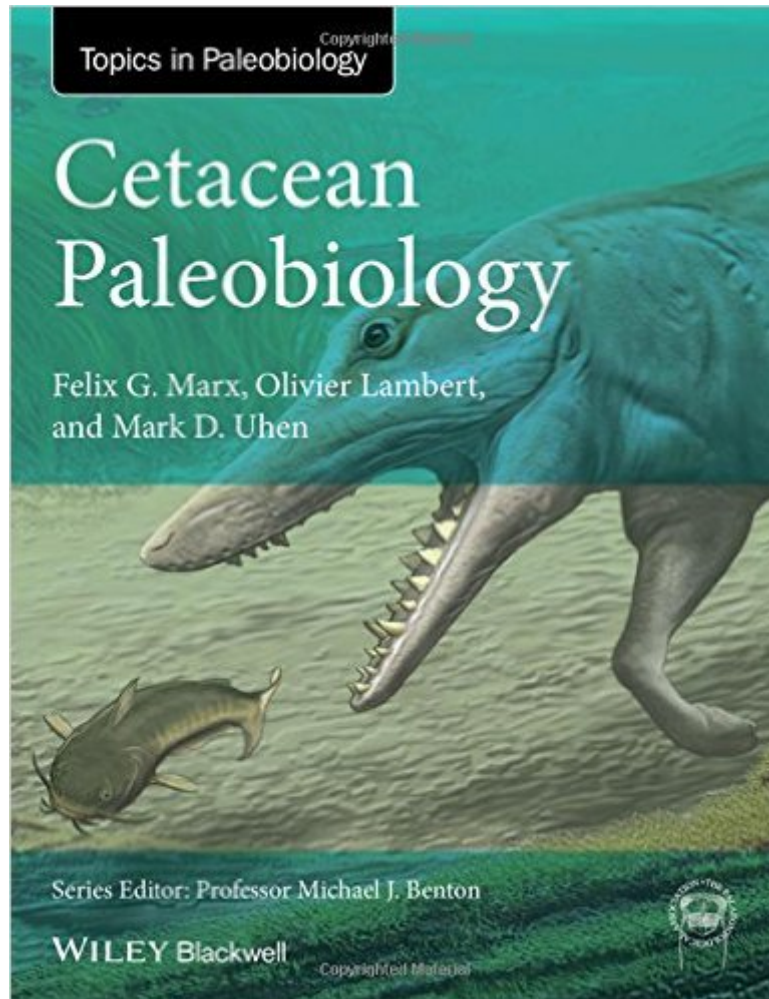


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Cetacean Paleobiology (TOPA Topics In Paleobiology)



Synopsis

Cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) have fascinated and bewildered humans throughout history. Their mammalian affinities have been long recognized, but exactly which group of terrestrial mammals they descend from has, until recently, remained in the dark. Recent decades have produced a flurry of new fossil cetaceans, extending their fossil history to over 50 million years ago. Along with new insights from genetics and developmental studies, these discoveries have helped to clarify the place of cetaceans among mammals, and enriched our understanding of their unique adaptations for feeding, locomotion and sensory systems. Their continuously improving fossil record and successive transformation into highly specialized marine mammals have made cetaceans a textbook case of evolution - as iconic in its own way as the origin of birds from dinosaurs. This book aims to summarize our current understanding of cetacean evolution for the serious student and interested amateur using photographs, drawings, charts and illustrations.

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