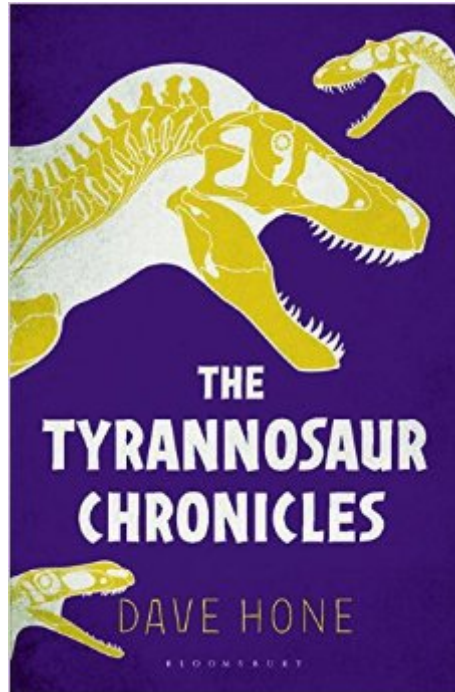


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The Tyrannosaur Chronicles: The Biology Of The Tyrant Dinosaurs



Synopsis

In the mid-nineteenth century, many dinosaur fossils were found in the United States, especially during the 1870s and 1880s "Bone Wars." Paleontologists Edward Drinker Cope and Othniel Charles Marsh discovered dozens of skeletons, but in 1905, fossil hunter Barnum Brown named the first tyrannosaur known to science--Tyrannosaurus rex. Tyrannosaurus was an impressive beast; it topped five tons, was more than thirty-five feet (twelve meters) long, and had the largest head and most powerful bite of any land animal, ever. Tyrannosaurs started small, just a couple of yards long, and over the course of 100 million years, evolved into giant meat-slicing bone crushers. As of 2015, there were nearly 30 described species of tyrannosaur, but during the last decade at least one new species has been identified and named every year, greatly improving what we know about how they lived, fed, bred, and died. THE TYRANNOSAUR CHRONICLES tracks the rise of these dinosaurs, and presents the latest research into their biology, showing off more than just their impressive statistics--tyrannosaurs had feathers, and fought and even ate one another. Indeed, David Hone tells the evolutionary story of the group through their anatomy, ecology, and behavior, exploring how they came to be the dominant terrestrial predators of the Mesozoic--and more recently, one of the great icons of biology.

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Customer Reviews

This is one of the best paleontology books I've read in quite some time, hands down. I have no formal training in paleontology, I'm just a lifelong enthusiast. Having said that, the book is thoroughly accessible to laypersons without watering down the technical rigour and attention to detail. Its scope

is comprehensive, beginning with universal basics such as anatomy and phylogeny, grounding the reader in fundamental terms and concepts, before jumping into some of the topics of specifically tyrannosaur paleobiology, namely behavior, ecology, and so on. This is the kind of book paleontology enthusiasts like myself wish there was more of. Informative, well-written, and about as up to date as a science book can get, given the current rate of discovery in the field. I can't speak from the perspective of a professional paleontologist, but speaking as a reasonably well-informed layperson, it definitely enriched my understanding.

I just started reading it today and this book explains so clearly the anatomy and lifestyle of T-Rex. It keeps my persistent questions answered and the reading flows very naturally between chapters.

This looks like an interesting book but don't buy the Kindle edition, at least on my devices the illustrations are extremely tiny and I can't discover any way to enlarge them. The usual touch-screen method of enlarging with two fingers doesn't work. The value of a scientific book is greatly enhanced by the illustrations so if you can't see them you are missing a lot. I have returned the kindle version and am going to buy the print edition.

This is a "small footprint" book -- about 9 x 5.5 inches. That surprised me; I thought it was going to be a coffee-table book. If one is interested in dinosaurs, one almost has to read a new book every five years. This would be the book for 2016. So much changes, so fast. I won't repeat what all the other reviews have said. It's a 5-star book. I don't like bucket lists, but if I had a bucket list, a visit to the Judith River area in Montana and a visit to the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, Montana, would be on the list. I can't imagine anyone seriously interested in this subject not having this book.

A Great Book!!! Not "overly scientific", which I like. Personally, I'm still not buying the "Feathered Image" for TRex, but who knows? Time will tell, I guess. Nice up-to-date info on the subject matter.

I want to start by saying that I have spent the last 15 years teaching about paleontology so my depth of knowledge is a bit deeper than most amateurs. I do read a lot of general knowledge books about dinosaurs and other prehistoric life so I can a) try to keep up on the current information on the animals and to b) have good reviews of that knowledge that I can put into my lessons. This book was good, but not great. There is nothing new. In fact the book feels a bit dated (only a couple of years, but in the world of dinosaurology that can be a lot). It was a nice review of well-known

information. David Hone does a good job of countering Jack Horner's contention that T. rex was an obligate scavenger and also points out that just because animals hang out together they're not necessarily a social group like a pack of wolves. So it's overall a good book for beginners, but if, like me, you want more depth there are other sources out there that are better.

I've been on a bit of a dinosaur run lately. Not because I suddenly grew interested in the great creatures; that interest began at around two or three and hasn't waned a bit. No, it's just simply that for whatever reason, a good number of new books have been released recently, including this review's subject, *The Tyrannosaur Chronicles* by David Hone. As the title implies, Hone is working within a tightly constrained focus here rather than dealing with dinosaurs in general. His focus on tyrannosaurs (the group, not simply the singular *Tyrannosaurus Rex*) is laser sharp, allowing him to delve into what we think we know about the creature in great and all-encompassing detail. Some, particularly casual fans of dinosaurs may very well find the book too detailed -- it really does drill down into the nitty gritty -- but if the granular details on bones, for instance, gets a little much for you, it's easy enough to skim through to the next paragraph that zooms back out to a more accommodating level. I confess there were a few such moments for me in the biology section, but they were few and far between and mostly I found it all fascinating, both in the details of the creatures themselves and in our ability to determine said details. Or at least to our best level of confidence; Hone is always careful to remind us that we are working with very little data here most times, as well as reminding us of the difficulty of peering back in time 65-100 million years ago. Structurally, Hone organizes the book into the following sections: Introduction: a broad look at the Tyrannosaur group, its evolution, and its context in time Morphology: a very specific and methodical look at what we know or speculate about its biology Ecology: a look at how the creature lived and reproduced in its particular world/environment The Future: what may be coming down the pipeline as we dig more and employ more technological tools, both hardware and software The introduction offers up a basic overview of how biologists classify living beings (those who recall the old kingdom phylum family etc. days may be surprised to learn scientists have moved on from that method) and then delves into the grouping and relationships involving tyrannosaurs. It all serves well to give a sense of the fullness of the group--Hone argues for 29 species of tyrannosaurs--and its evolution through the time of the dinosaurs, especially for those who think there is only one kind, the beloved T-Rex, star of film and literature and the dreams (or perhaps nightmares) of young children. The biology section is incredibly complete and as mentioned, if anyone feels just a little overwhelmed by detail it will probably occur here as Hone works his way inch by inch through the

body, literally from head to toe and seemingly not skipping any part, whether inside or outside the body. The segment on ecology is equally methodical and complete, with a creature by creature look, for instance, at just which contemporaneous creature's might serve as prey for tyrannosaurs (both adult and juvenile) and why. Here, he sadly punctures (pun perhaps intended) the favorite set movie scene of T-Rex taking on a triceratops, explaining quite logically that taking on a multi-ton opponent with horns that can impale you was probably not the most evolutionarily intelligent choice in terms of survival of the individual or the species. All of the information is as up to date as one could hope for, and Hone even notes in several places how he has had to rewrite that particularly section based on new finds that occurred in the process of writing or publishing the book. Everything is clearly and logically and (I'll use this word again because it is so apt for this work) methodically presented. If details may get to be a bit much in spots, it's not because of any confusion or vagueness or flaw in the writing; it's just that most of us are fine with a certain level of knowledge and are equally OK without knowing the finer points of the tibiae or metatarsals. Though that said, how these changed to allow for greater speed is actually quite interesting. In fact, a list of what I found "quite interesting" or fascinating would go on for some time. A few such points would be the difficulty in deterring the sex of a dinosaur (hint--don't buy those names some specimens, such as "Sue" are given) or whether a particular fossil is a new species or simply a juvenile or even just an outlier individual, the method of reproduction, the role and prominence of feathers, the debate over warm blooded versus cold blooded (especially the very clear way Hone explains the antiquated nature of those terms and how they have been replaced by more accurate and nuanced descriptors), the be-wary-of-those-size-estimates explanation, the image of dinosaurs frolicking in snow, debates over predation versus scavenging and parenting, and, well, as I said, the list would go on for some time. In short, The Tyrannosaur Chronicles is a thorough, detailed, highly up to date and readable master class in all things tyrannosaur, while also offering more than its share of information on dinosaurs in general, though not in the same degree of detail. Always careful in his claims and precise in his language, Hone does an excellent job introducing us to new knowledge and correcting what has become outdated or simply accepted as true thanks to pop culture. Highly recommended. originally appeared on fantasyliterature.com

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