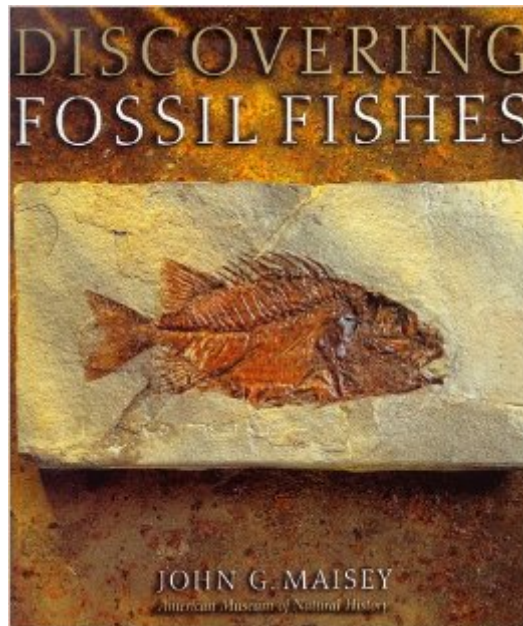


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Discovering Fossil Fishes (Henry Holt Reference Book)



Synopsis

Fishes have a unique evolutionary history that stretches back in time more than 450 million years. They are incredibly ancient-older than the dinosaurs-and include the ancestors of all limbed vertebrates living on land, even humans. In *Discovering Fossil Fishes*, John Maisey traces the evolution of fishes over the course of nearly half a billion years, describing the discovery of their extraordinary fossil remains and explaining what these ancient animals tell us about our own place in the history of life. Combining current scientific information with entertaining tales about historic and contemporary fieldwork, Maisey brings to life the development of armored fishes, monster sharks, and fishes with arms as he reveals the subtleties of evolution's greatest success story. More abundant and more diverse than their air-breathing cousins, fishes today dominate the seas and freshwaters of Earth. Through outstanding full-color photographs of their fossils and of fossil reconstructions by artists David Miller and Ivy Rutzky, along with informative photographs, charts, diagrams, and drawings, we discover a staggering half-billion-year history in which lies our own watery origins. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

John Maisey is a curator at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, behind whose monumental facade seethes a hotbed of revolution in the science of classification. The shake-up is cladistics, a movement that began with studies of insects and fish and is gradually sweeping through all of biology. Maisey's book gives a clear overview of the evolution of fishes and their

descendents (which includes people) from a mind-broadening perspective. The downside of cladistics is a forest of terminology, but anyone who can master the nomenclature of a children's dinosaur book should get even more out of this illuminating work.

YA-Maisey does an excellent job of tracing the evolutionary pathways of fish, as illustrated by the fossil records. It is a narrow subject, but well within the grasp of advanced biology students. The text is not overly technical, but is not simplistic. Susan McFadden, Fairfax County Public Library Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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