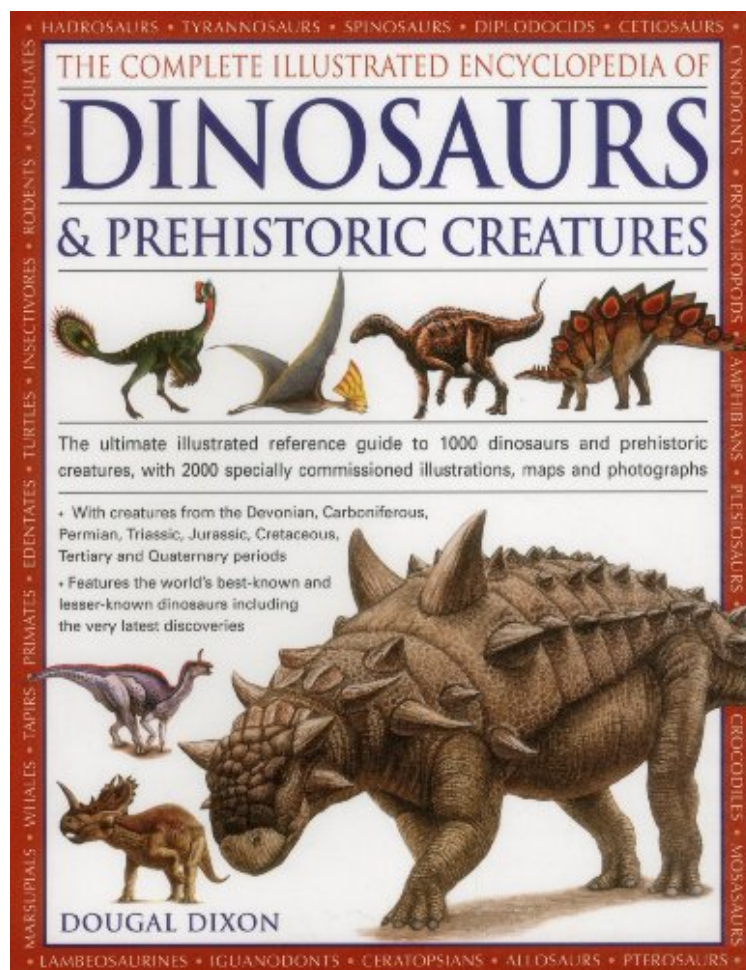


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Dougal Dixon

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77 of 77 people found the following review helpful. A good book for beginners
By Laura
If you're looking for a fairly comprehensive book describing many dinosaur species, this is a good choice. I would recommend this mostly to those who are just beginning to have an interest in paleontology, or those who want a refresher or easy reference book. There's plenty of good stuff in this book, but there are also some not so good. Let's start with what's good! This book doesn't get overly technical or weighed down by scientific jargon, so it's easy to pick up and read at any time. When a scientific or anatomical term is presented, it's always given a definition, and there's a small glossary in the back if you need a reminder. There's a nice, but short, introduction section at the beginning that briefly covers some basics on evolution and how the species in the book are related to one another. It also describes how fossils are formed and some examples of prehistoric landscapes. My favorite bits in the introduction are the full spread illustrations that clearly mark the flora and fauna. The encyclopedia section of the book (which is the majority of what you're getting here!) features species starting with the Devonian period. Each animal has a short description describing its distinguishing features, where it has been found, etc. This is great for a quick look-up of a species to get some basic info. Each entry has its own illustration. The illustrations in the book are mostly very nice, but they do have some inaccuracies. Primarily, most suffer from "shrink-wrapping", a popular trend in paleoart that gives the animals a 'skin and bones' appearance- this is most notable on the heads. The theropods (traditionally, the bipedal carnivorous dinosaurs) are frequently illustrated with "bunny wrists", when we now know that their palms would have been facing each other. There are quite a few grammatical errors in the book, including a mix-up of words in one sentence that got a laugh out of me: "It has been accepted for some time that *dinosaurs* evolved from *birds*." Of course, dinosaurs and birds should be swapped there. Generally, though, the text is pretty good. Keep in mind that the author is from Scotland, so some of the "british english" spellings of words may seem odd to Americans reading it. For example, maneuver vs. manoeuvre. The most recent dinosaur finds are not included in this book, so don't expect to find entries on Yi Qi, Wendiceratops, or the updated quadrupedal stance of Spinosaurus. A sentence at the very beginning of the book describes this best, "New discoveries are being made so quickly, that before this book is on the bookshelves there will have been an overwhelming number of new finds and developments in the understanding of the subject." In light of this, it would behoove the reader to do a bit more research on any given species they're introduced to in this book, if they're interested in learning more. All in all, it's a nice book if you're looking for some basic facts, or like the encyclopedia layout of it. Kids will probably enjoy the illustrations, but may not be interested in the text; this isn't a wow-factor book for very small children. If they're really passionate and interested in prehistoric life, then I'd say go for it, otherwise this might be more suitable for early teens and up. As a side note, the size of the book is much more compact than I thought it would be; I've included a photo with a coke can for scale, for those who ignored the dimensions in the description, like me, haha. My copy arrived somewhat dinged up, on the back cover particularly, though is usually pretty good with their packaging- since it's a somewhat heavy book, I might suggest having it gift wrapped when sent to you, to avoid it getting smashed up corners.
31 of 32 people found the following review helpful.
NOT an update, but a reissue of previous book
By James Kuether
First, this is a great reference book. I originally purchased this when it came out about three years ago. This volume contains no new information - it is simply a paperback edition of that same book, which is a real disappointment considering the number of discoveries made during that time. If you don't already own this book, it's highly recommended. If you do already own it, no need to purchase again.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent reference.
By Roy Blaze
I like reading about dinosaurs but many dinosaur books lack pictures or they have vague illustrations. I have an encyclopedia of dinosaurs, 20 years out of date. So I got this one to have a newer copy and it is very nice. Each animal is pictured and annotated. Also there are more than dinos in here and that is a big plus.

Ever since giant fossils were discovered in the western world more than 200 years ago, dinosaurs or "terrible lizards" as they were named, have captured the public imagination. New discoveries and excavations continue to make dinosaurs an endless subject of fascination, and each new find has added or confirmed a different dimension to our understanding of the world of prehistoric creatures. This seminal book brings together every important dinosaur find from the last two centuries and from the world's richest fossil sites. The result is a comprehensive, groundbreaking book that details every kind of prehistoric creature known from the age of dinosaurs, including dinosaurs, fish, mammals, reptiles, pterosaurs, plesiosaurs, ichthyosaurs, amphibians, crocodiles, turtles, birds and mosasaurs. A comprehensive introduction explains the evolution of earth's geology and the development of animal and plant life within it, culminating with the arrival of the dinosaurs. It explains the classification of dinosaurs and how they developed over the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous eras, from the smallest sea creature to the largest land-dwelling dinosaurs with the greatest body mass. The different habitats where dinosaurs are thought to have lived are all depicted, from deserts to lagoons, lakes, mountains, swamps and plains, together with the fossil evidence that helps to explain the presence of dinosaurs in each site. Fascinating anatomical drawings demonstrate the skeletal make up of the different dinosaurs - sauropods, theropods, ornithomimids, and armoured dinosaurs - and explain how they functioned, moved and lived. Expert analysis of fossils has provided theories about what dinosaurs and prehistoric creatures ate; fossil footprints help explain how they socialized, whether moving in herds, or in solitary isolation; and

the discovery of eggs provides theories about how dinosaurs formed colonies, migrating to different areas to rear their young. Finally the role of the dinosaur hunters is explained, with a glimpse at how fossils are excavated, and where the most important fossil sites are in the world. The main section of the book is an encyclopedia of 1000 dinosaurs and prehistoric creatures. Every entry is clearly described according to the latest scientific thinking and is placed within the context of when it lived. Its size and shape, muscle and bone structure are detailed together with explanations of how it moved, hunted and defended itself from attack. Fossil evidence has revealed the feeding preferences of many dinosaurs and the position of jaws and teeth show how it killed and ate its prey. Current ideas about skin texture and covering are all explained. Each main entry is accompanied by a highly detailed and technically accurate watercolour illustration, and a map showing the sites where fossils have been found. This unique illustrated volume, with its unparalleled combination of the latest expert research and beautiful visual reconstruction, will be an endless source of fascination and an essential family reference for school and home study. The ultimate illustrated reference to 1000 dinosaurs and prehistoric creatures from the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous eras and beyond. The unique visual encyclopedia profiles all the known dinosaurs and prehistoric creatures, including fish, mammals, reptiles, pterosaurs, plesiosaurs, ichthyosaurs, amphibians, crocodiles, turtles, birds and mosasaurs. Includes more than 1800 specially commissioned watercolour illustrations, maps and anatomical diagrams, with every entry detailing appearance, behaviour, habitat and life cycle. A fascinating introduction clearly explains the evolution of the dinosaurs, their adaptation and specialization, and the interdependence of prehistoric creatures, together with depictions of the various habitats and location maps of the world's fossil sites. A ground-breaking and expert study by a leading paleontologist and geologist, the book includes all the best-known creatures as well as hundreds of lesser-known and obscure species, and the latest up-to-the-minute discoveries.

About the Author Dougal Dixon was born in Scotland and later graduated from The University of St Andrews with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1970 and a Master of Science degree in 1972. He began his career as a geological consultant for a publishing company in 1973, nurturing a special interest in fossils and evolution. He is now a full-time writer specializing in earth sciences and has written many children's books and encyclopedias with a special interest in dinosaurs. He has made several television appearances and acted as a consultant and animator for a video programme about dinosaurs. As a practical geologist he took part in the 1995 Open University/Earthwatch expedition to Askja Caldera in central Iceland. In 1987 he was involved in excavating a dinosaur-rich site in Jurassic rocks at Durlston on the Dorset coast. Dougal was presented with the Distinguished Achievement Award for Excellence in Educational Journalism by The Educational Press Association of America in 1993, the Helen Roney Sattler Award in 1993, The Children's Book Council 1994 Outstanding Trade Science Book Award, and The Times Educational Supplement Primary Schoolbook Award in 1996. In the same year he was appointed as a trustee of the Dinosaur Society, UK.