

Splendid Isolation: The Curious History of South American Mammals, by George Gaylord Simpson. Yale University Press, £11.

Of all the continents South America in particular lends itself to an attempt to provide a concise but comprehensive historical account of its mammal fauna. Its isolation through most of the Tertiary period, the 'age of mammals', was only a little less complete than that of Australia, but its fossil record is enormously more comprehensive, with an almost continuous sequence from the late Cretaceous, when a few fragments demonstrate the existence of marsupials and primitive ungulates, to the Pleistocene and post-Pleistocene when the distinctive 'megafauna' of giant sloths, glyptodons, sabre-toothed cats, elephants etc. finally disappeared from the scene. However, continuity of a fossil record is a relative concept and even the best needs a skilled practitioner to make any sense of a sequence whose successive elements may not only be separated by a few million years but by several thousand miles, and may be represented, through the fortuitous nature of fossilisation, by small random samples of the species actually present and by equally small, erratic samples of their bones or teeth.

George Gaylord Simpson is a guide who inspires confidence. He has been an active student of the fossil mammals of South America, in the field and in museums, for fifty-five years and it is very pleasing that he has condensed his vast experience into such a digestible form. It is basically a chronological account, documenting the arrival and radiation of the strange edentates, ungulates, caviomorph rodents and primates and their relatively recent interaction with invaders from North America as the island continent rejoined its northern neighbour within the last two million years or so.

To some extent the book falls between two stools – it is written in narrative form rather than as a reference work, but the detailed discussion of unfamiliar groups can be rather tedious for those without the existing framework of knowledge on which to hang the details (in spite of the author's statement in the preface that he has 'not assumed any previous technical or detailed knowledge of the subject'). There are intermittent glimpses of the fossil sites and of the personalities of the palaeontologists who explored them, but in a subject where interpretation has been a distinctly subjective matter one might have hoped for a little more flesh to clothe the bones of the palaeontologists if not of the fossil mammals themselves.

GORDON B. CORBET

Hawaiian Reptiles and Amphibians, by Sean McKeown. Oriental Publishing Co., Honolulu, \$3.50

Vertebrates of Florida, by Henry M. Stevenson. Florida University Press, \$35.

Florida and Hawaii are two states of the USA which share an ongoing problem: introduced species. Even five years ago Florida's vertebrates included a dozen species of reptiles and amphibians, 25 birds and 10 mammals which were the result of escapes or liberations, among them such exotics as rhesus monkey, spectacled caiman and budgerigar. But interesting as Florida's native fauna is (or was), it cannot match that of Hawaii in terms of endemic species; neither can it match it for introductions and extinctions.

Only four of Hawaii's 22 species of reptiles and amphibians can be considered native: one sea snake and three marine turtles. The rest, which include poison arrow frogs, bullfrogs, chameleon, gekkos, skinks and snakes, have been brought by man. In fact introductions have been going on so long that some, such as the Eurasian toad *Bufo bufo* and the black spotted frog *Rana nigromaculata*, have not been recorded since the war. The history of species such as the giant toad *Bufo marinus*, introduced in 1932 to control sugar cane beetles – and of course ran amok – is almost too well known to need repeating. But some species, including four gekkos and three skinks, were probably

Splendid Isolation The Curious History Of South America Mammals

J. Sued-Badillo



Splendid Isolation The Curious History Of South America Mammals:

Splendid Isolation George Gaylord Simpson, 1996 Splendid Isolation George Gaylord Simpson, 1983-07 History of Terrestrial Mammals in South America Thomas Defler, 2018-12-19 This book takes a non technical approach in covering the evolution of South American mammalian fauna throughout geological history and discusses how South America has changed due to mammalian invasions Unlike other works on the subject this book attempts to answer several crucial questions that often go unmentioned together in one cohesive monograph What was the fauna like before the American interchange What were the origins of the now extinct groups when northern species arrived and out competed them How did the modern mammalian fauna come into being with such disparate animal groups This information is given from a historical perspective throughout the book's 15 chapters and is presented in an easily graspable fashion by mostly avoiding technical language The book is written for academics scientists and scholars engaged in paleontology zoology and evolutionary biology but may also appeal to a larger audience of general readers interested in mammalian evolution The book begins with an introduction describing the tools necessary to interpret the evolutionary history of South American mammals in geological terms and some of the early people who helped found South American mammalian paleontology Chapter 2 describes the Mesozoic first mammals of Gondwana and what we are learning about them dominant before the K T extinction event Then chapters 3 through 8 cover the Cenozoic or Age of Mammals highlighting the major mammalian groups of South America that replaced the earlier mammals of Gondwana These groups include the marsupials native ungulates the xenarthrans armadillos anteaters sloths the caviomorphs rodents and the platyrrhine monkeys Chapters 9 and 10 address the Antarctic La Meseta fossils and the Colombian La Venta fossil faunal assemblages Chapter 11 discusses the neotropical mammals that invaded the Caribbean Islands and illustrates the influence South America has had on adjacent faunas Chapter 12 describes the origin of the Amazon River and the role it has played in the evolution of the mammals and other flora and fauna Chapter 13 tells the story of the Great American Biotic Interchange GABI and chapter 14 follows this up with a discussion of the Pleistocene mammal communities and their eventual extinction Chapter 15 concludes the text by discussing the modern mammals of South America and how despite the extensive Pleistocene extinctions there is still a lot of mammalian diversity in South America

History of Cenozoic Mammals from South America Federico Agnolin, 2024-04-23 The Cenozoic history of South America faunas mainly rests on the evidence yielded by the study of fossil mammals Following the seminal work of William D Matthew George G Simpson established the slogan Splendid Isolation for describing the evolutionary history of South American faunas He envisaged South America as well as other Southern Hemisphere landmasses as dead ends in the evolution and geographical expansion of animals and plants that since the Mesozoic come in successive migratory waves from the North More than 40 years passed away from the last important contribution by Simpson 1980 Since then in spite to the exponential increase in biological paleontological and geological knowledge and an incredibly new number of

fossils his scheme remained almost unpolluted and most recent books regarding the palaeobiogeography of South American vertebrates follow this paradigm nearly without criticism However the fact that South America was joined to Africa Australia Antarctica and India during most of the Cretaceous and that it was still connected Australia via Antarctica and probably Africa up to the Paleogene together with the large number of shared biotic components between these landmasses point in favor of a different paleobiogeographical scenario The book aims to demonstrate that during the Paleogene and most of the Neogene the nature and evolutionary history of South American vertebrates is by far much more intricate than previously envisaged As will be shown new evidence suggests that southern landmasses may have played an important role in the early evolution and radiation of extant mammal clades This book is not written to conform with the ideal of a technical manual or a review and is not carried forward to collect all that has been said before The main goals are to criticize the current Palaeobiogeographic Model of Vertebrate Settlement of South America and to propose a new vision based on the evidence provided by the natural world in the last decades

A Brief History of South American Metatherians Francisco Goin, Michael Woodburne, Ana Natalia Zimicz, Gabriel M. Martin, Laura Chornogubsky, 2015-10-16 This book summarizes major aspects of the evolution of South American metatherians including their epistemologic phylogenetic biogeographic faunal tectonic paleoclimatic and metabolic contexts A brief overview of the evolution of each major South American lineage Ameridelphia Sparassodonta Didelphimorphia Paucituberculata Microbiotheria and Polydolopimorphia is provided It is argued that due to physiological constraints metatherian evolution closely followed the conditions imposed by global temperatures In general terms during the Paleocene and the early Eocene multiple radiations of metatherian lineages occurred with many adaptive types exploiting insectivorous frugivorous and omnivorous adaptive zones In turn a mixture of generalized and specialized types the latter mainly exploiting carnivorous and granivorous folivorous adaptive zones characterized the second half of the Cenozoic In both periods climate was the critical driver of their radiation and turnovers

Evolution of South American Mammalian Predators During the Cenozoic: Paleobiogeographic and Paleoenvironmental Contingencies Francisco J. Prevosti, Analía M. Forasiepi, 2018-01-02 This book summarizes the evolution of carnivorous mammals in the Cenozoic of South America It presents paleontological information on the two main mammalian carnivorous groups in South America Metatheria and Eutheria The topics include the origin systematics phylogeny paleoecology and evolution of the Sparassodonta and Carnivora The book is based on a wide variety of published sources from the last few decades

Mesozoic Mammals from South America and Their Forerunners Guillermo W. Rougier, Agustín G. Martinelli, Analía M. Forasiepi, 2021-02-22 This book summarizes the most relevant published paleontological information supplemented by our own original work on the record of Mesozoic mammals evolution their close ancestors and their immediate descendants Mammals evolved in a systematically diverse world amidst a dynamic geography that is at the root of the 6 500 species living today Fossils of Mesozoic mammals while rare and often incomplete are key to understanding how

mammals have evolved over more than 200 million years Mesozoic mammals and their close relatives occur in a few dozen localities from Argentina Brazil Chile Bolivia and Peru spanning from the Mid Triassic to the Late Cretaceous with some lineages surviving the cataclysmic end of the Cretaceous period into the Cenozoic of Argentina There are roughly 25 recognized mammalian species distributed in several distinctive lineages including australosphenidans multituberculates gondwanatherians eutriconodonts amphilestids and dryolestoids among others With its focus on diversity systematics phylogeny and their impact on the evolution of mammals there is no similar book currently available

Encyclopedia of Deserts Michael A. Mares, 2017-01-19 Encyclopedia of Deserts represents a milestone it is the first comprehensive reference to the first comprehensive reference to deserts and semideserts of the world Approximately seven hundred entries treat subjects ranging from desert survival to the way deserts are formed Topics include biology birds mammals reptiles amphibians fishes invertebrates plants bacteria physiology evolution geography climatology geology hydrology anthropology and history The thirty seven contributors including volume editor Michael A Mares have had extensive careers in deserts research encompassing all of the world's arid and semiarid regions The Encyclopedia opens with a subject list by topic an organizational guide that helps the reader grasp interrelationships and complexities in desert systems Each entry concludes with cross references to other entries in the volume inviting the reader to embark on a personal expedition into fascinating previously unknown terrain In addition a list of important readings facilitates in depth study of each topic An exhaustive index permits quick access to places topics and taxonomic listings of all plants and animals discussed More than one hundred photographs drawings and maps enhance our appreciation of the remarkable life landforms history and challenges of the world's arid land

General History of the Caribbean - UNESCO J. Sued-Badillo, 2019-06-12 Volume 1 of the General History of the Caribbean relates to the history of the origins of the earliest Caribbean people and analyses their various political social cultural and economic organizations over time This volume investigates the movement of Paleoindians into the islands and looks at the agricultural societies which developed It then explores the indigenous societies at the time of the Spanish Conquest the hierarchy of the chiefdoms and the development of slavery

Vertebrate Palaeontology Michael J. Benton, 2009-02-05 Vertebrate Palaeontology is a complete up to date history of the evolution of vertebrates The third edition of this popular text has been extensively revised to incorporate the latest research including new material from North and South America Australia Europe China Africa and Russia Highlights astonishing new discoveries including new dinosaurs and Mesozoic birds from China features a new chapter on how to study fossil vertebrates provides an increased emphasis on the cladistic framework with cladograms set apart from the body of the text and full lists of diagnostic characters includes new molecular evidence on early mammal diversification new features aid study including new functional and developmental feature spreads key questions and extensive references to useful web sites strong phylogenetic focus making it an up to date source of the latest broad scale systematic data on vertebrate evolution To access the artwork from the book please visit [ahref](#)

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The Great American Biotic Interchange Francis G. Stehli, S. David Webb, 2013-03-09 Two rather different elements combine to explain the origin of this volume: one scientific and one personal. The broader of the two is the scientific basis: the time for such a volume had arrived. Geology had made remarkable progress toward an understanding of the physical history of the Caribbean Basin for the last 100 million years or so. On the biological side, many new discoveries had elucidated the distributional history of terrestrial organisms in and between the two Americas. Geological and biological data had been combined to yield the timing of important events with unprecedented resolution. Clearly, when each of two broad disciplines is making notable advances and when each provides new insights for the other, the rewards of cross-disciplinary contacts increase exponentially. The present volume represents an attempt to bring together a group of geologists, paleontologists, and biologists capable of exploiting this opportunity through presentation of an interdisciplinary synthesis of evidence and hypothesis concerning interamerican connections during the Cretaceous and Cenozoic. Advances in plate tectonics form the basis for a modern synthesis and in the broadest terms dictate the framework within which the past and present distributions of organisms must be interpreted. Any scientific discipline must seek tests of its conclusions from data outside of its own confines.

Time Traveler Michael Novacek, 2003-03-15 True stories of fossil hunting adventures around the globe from a world-class field scientist and a highly entertaining writer. The American Scholar Michael Novacek, a world-renowned paleontologist who has discovered important fossils on virtually every continent, is an authority on patterns of evolution and on the relationships among extinct and extant organisms. *Time Traveler* is his captivating account of how his boyhood enthusiasm for dinosaurs became a lifelong commitment to vanguard science. He takes us with him as he discovers fossils in his own backyard in Los Angeles, then goes looking for them in the high Andes, the black volcanic mountains of Yemen, and the incredibly rich fossil badlands of the Gobi Desert. Wherever Novacek goes, he searches for still undiscovered evidence of what life was like on Earth millions of years ago. Along the way, he has almost drowned, been stung by deadly scorpions, been held at gunpoint by a renegade army, and nearly choked in raging dust storms. Fieldwork is very demanding in a host of unusual, dramatic, sometimes hilarious ways, and Novacek writes of its alluring perils with affection and discernment. But in addition to being an enthralling adventure story, *Time Traveler* makes sense of many complex themes about dinosaur evolution, continental drift, mass extinctions, new methods for understanding ancient environments, and the evolutionary secrets of DNA in fossil organisms. Includes photos and illustrations. A superb introduction to paleontology. Edward O. Wilson. An engaging book that gives us an excellent sense of the way paleontologists have arrived at their world-shaking conclusions. The New York Times Book Review. Novacek offers a spellbinding natural history of our planet as well as the equally fascinating story of how he fell into the profession. Publishers Weekly.

The Diversity of Life

Edward O. Wilson, 1999 This classic by the distinguished Harvard entomologist tells how life on earth evolved and became diverse and now how diversity and life are endangered by us truly While Wilson contributed a great deal to environmental ethics by calling for the preservation of whole ecosystems rather than individual species his environmentalism appears too anthropocentric We should judge every scrap of biodiversity as priceless while we learn to use it and come to understand what it means to humanity And Signals abound that the loss of life s diversity endangers not just the body but the spirit This reprint of the 1992 Belknap Press publication contains a new foreword Annotation copyrighted by Book News Inc Portland OR

Comparative Anatomy of the Gastrointestinal Tract in Eutheria II Peter Langer, 2017-10-23 This volume of the series Handbook of Zoology deals with the anatomy of the gastrointestinal digestive tract stomach small intestine caecum and colon in all eutherian orders and suborders It presents compilations of anatomical studies as well as an extensive list of references which makes widely dispersed literature accessible Introductory sections to orders and suborders give notice to biology taxonomy biogeography and food of the respective taxon It is a characteristic of this book that different sections of the post oesophageal tract are discussed separately from each other Informations on form and function of organs of digestion in eutherians are discussed under comparative anatomical aspects The variability and diversity of anatomical structures represents the basis of functional differentiations

Simple Curiosity George Gaylord Simpson, 2023-11-15 Gathers letters written by the influential American paleontologist which share his thoughts on science art literature and travel Gathers letters written by the influential American paleontologist which share his thoughts on science art literature and travel

Conservation Biology Peggy L. Fiedler, Peter M. Kareiva, 2013-06-29 Reflecting a new generation of conservation biologists upper division and graduate level conservation biology courses as well as for individual reference this book incorporates a number of new authors and additional chapters covering all aspects of one of the most dynamic areas in the life sciences Containing ten additional chapters it includes such timely topics as ecosystem management and the economics of conservation

Biogeography and Plate Tectonics J.C. Briggs, 1987-08-01 One needs to look at only a small portion of the enormous literature on plate tectonics published in the last 15 years to realize that there are many differences between the various reconstructions that have been presented It becomes obvious that although there is a general agreement about the presence of an assembly of continents a Pangaea in the early Mesozoic there is considerable disagreement among earth scientists as to the configuration of the assembly and the manner and timing of the subsequent dispersal While the revolution in geophysics was taking place systematic work in paleontology and neontology was being carried out This book is an attempt to incorporate the biological evidence into the theory of plate tectonics The author traces the changing relationships among the various biogeographic regions and demonstrates how such changes may often be correlated with the gradual geographic alteration of the earth s surface He analyses recent information about the distribution of widespread groups of terrestrial and freshwater vertebrates invertebrates and plants and discusses the biogeographical effects of the

movement of oceanic plates It is particularly important to obtain dependable information about certain critical times in the history of continental relationships We need to know when the terrestrial parts of the earth were broken apart and when they were joined together The present investigation makes it clear that we cannot depend entirely on evidence from plate tectonics nor will purely biological evidence suffice This book thus provides much of interest to systematists working on contemporary groups of plants and animals paleontologists evolutionary biologists and professors teaching courses in biogeography

Evolutionary Biogeography Juan Morrone, 2009 Rather than favoring only one approach Juan J Morrone proposes a comprehensive treatment of the developments and theories of evolutionary biogeography Evolutionary biogeography uses distributional phylogenetic molecular and fossil data to assess the historical changes that have produced current biotic patterns Panbiogeography parsimony analysis of endemism cladistic biogeography and phylogeography are the four recent and most common approaches Many conceive of these methods as representing different schools but Morrone shows how each addresses different questions in the various steps of an evolutionary biogeographical analysis Panbiogeography and parsimony analysis of endemism are useful for identifying biotic components or areas of endemism Cladistic biogeography uses phylogenetic data to determine the relationships between these biotic components Further information on fossils phylogeographic patterns and molecular clocks can be incorporated to identify different cenocrons Finally available geological knowledge can help construct a geobiotic scenario that may explain how analyzed areas were put into contact and how the biotic components and cenocrons inhabiting them evolved Morrone compares these methods and employs case studies to make it clear which is best for the question at hand Set problems discussion sections and glossaries further enhance classroom use Publisher's description

Rodent Pest Management Ishwar Prakash, 2018-05-04 The objective of this multi authored compendium is therefore to bring together the state of arts reported in one place Written by specialists by specialists in various fields of rodentology and to suggest future lines of research It is also felt that this work on rodent pest management will trigger more research effort for the benefit of mankind and help certain countries and organizations in revitalizing serious work in this field which it appears has dampened during the last few years

Civilizations development and species origin technologies Вадим Корпачев, 2020-08-13 The origin of life on Earth is the basic view of the world's concept At present its origin and development are treated either from the scientific evolutionary theory points of view or religious mythological ones At the same time the evolutionary theory fails to provide grounded explanations to a lot of events which have happened and are observed in nature The data related to the complexity of life processes genetic programming and many biology and palaeontological facts cast doubt on the possibility of spontaneous occurrence of protein organisms during evolutionary transformations They indicate that the protein life development occurred in the direction of the planned improvement through the complex technology's implementation which requires specific scientific knowledge Therefore the necessity to formulate the new technological concept of the life appearance on

Earth which is provided by the given book has occurred It summarizes numerous well known facts which are being interpreted as the result of the highly developed civilization technological developments The stated views have more grounds for existence than the evolutionary theory and biblical ideas about the divine creation of the world The fact that society treats all the ideas of the life creation as religious ones and that they are used by the theologians turns out to be the ideological problem The book is aimed at overcoming the barrier of such non perception The analysis performed allows the reader to understand in which cases random events occur and in which ones there is a logical purposeful intelligent activity the result of which is the development of self replicating protein organisms programmed to perform the work necessary to meet the needs of their creators on Earth Reflections on the possible material nature of the highly developed mind carriers are given According to the author a human being is not a passive observer of random evolutionary changes in nature but has his mission in the artificially developed system of energy supply of Earth along with other protein organisms If the protein world including humans has been created for a specific purpose then mankind must not violate its implementation and should follow its mission A new worldview should introduce changes in the main mankind s activity spheres science politics religion and the human being s personal life The book is designed for a wide range of readers of various specialties Conceptually it is important for people who do not share the evolutionary theory provisions and existing religious beliefs

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