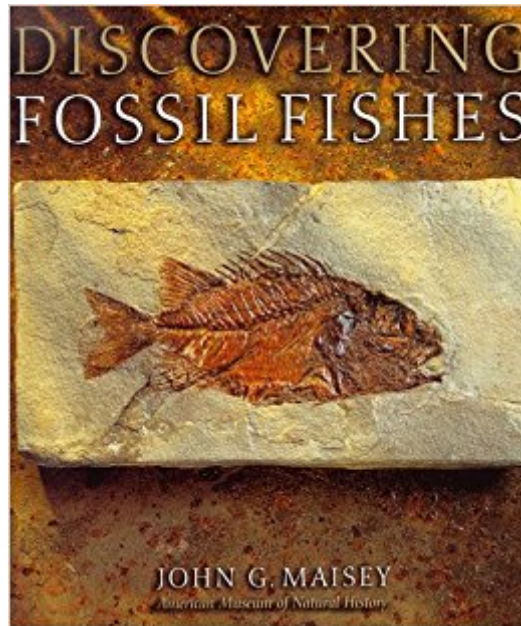


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# Discovering Fossil Fishes (Henry Holt Reference Book)



## 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.

## 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.

If you're the type of reader who spends a little more time at the local aquarium, who marvels at any creature dangling from the fishing line, or cherishes the little fossil Knightia you bought as a child, this book is essential reading. Discovering Fossil Fishes presents the 500 million year evolutionary history of fishes in a logical and visually stunning presentation that is highly informative and entertaining. The book features outstanding photography of fossil specimens found around the globe. Fine illustrations offer a window into a prehistoric aquatic environment filled with both exotic and familiar-looking fish. The juxtaposition of the fossil specimen images with the "reconstructed" illustrations helps readers appreciate the value of our fossil record in understanding the subtleties of evolutionary development.

This is a gorgeous book with stunning pictures. I heavily rely on books like this one to inspire wonder about the real world in my children.

Well illustrated and easy to read. A must for anyone interested in prehistoric fish.

GREAT BOOK on Fossil Fishes, I like it and look through it often. Over and over again. Fabulous illustrations. This is THE BOOK on Fossil Fishes as far as I'm concerned.

Very informative book, has great descriptions of the different ancient fishes to the modern fishes. The pictures were well done and life like.

Really love this book.

Maisey is a curator of vertebrate paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History. With this

work he has brought the evolution of the fishes to the popular science reader. My only major complaint about this book is in format. I would like to have seen it arranged by geological period as apposed to taxonomic group. I also think that a more visual group of cladograms arranging all the fishes would have been in order. Many cladograms are included but they only show small snippets of the relationships between fishes and you have to piece a larger picture together throughout the book. The illustrations are excellent and you will have a hard time finding so many images of fossil fish, if you are just interested in seeing images of fossils then this will be great for you. I also liked how he discussed the development of major morphological features. While a person of specialized interest might be aware of these, having them all in one place is convenient. If you have a developing interest in fishes or in vertebrate paleontology than this book would be good to have. It would also be a nice compliment to any library including material on natural history.

I came across this book while finishing my MSc at Guelph. The book soon made its rounds among all the ichthyology students and faculty. It is well written, lavishly illustrated and nicely designed. Seeing this volume going for so cheap surprises me. I paid 5 times more for mine. Any student involved with fish taxonomy, evolution and general biology MUST get this book. I found the lateral views a bit goofy but the paintings of creatures in motion in their habitat are superb. People who are interested in early life on our planet should also consider having a look at this one. BRAVO Dr. Maisey!

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