



# The Mistaken Extinction: Dinosaur Extinction and the Origin of Birds

*By Lowell Dingus, Timothy Rowe*

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This is a comprehensive account of the life and death of dinosaurs. Modern birds, the authors assert, are the direct descendants of dinosaurs and represent the most ancient linking group of species on our planet.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Did the dinosaurs disappear, or did they merely take flight? In *The Mistaken Extinction*, two eminent paleontologists make a case for the continued existence of dinosaurs, at least in the form of some relatively diminutive descendants: birds. To prove their point, Lowell Dingus and Timothy Rowe first review leading theories about the dinosaurs' extinction, pointing to the shortcomings of each. Instead of dying out, Dingus and Rowe write, the dinosaurs merely evolved into another form. For skeptics troubled by such a direct link between their backyard blue jay and the lumbering T. rex, the authors point to problems with the current Linnean system of classifying life. Under a rival system known as cladistics, they contend that it's possible to identify the anatomical characteristics shared by birds and dinosaurs. It's an intriguing hypothesis, and one open to considerable debate. Either way, this beautifully illustrated and admirably comprehensive volume has much to offer birders and dinosaur buffs alike.

#### From Library Journal

For over a century, scientists have inquired into the cause of dinosaur extinction. Using the latest information and discoveries, noted paleontologists Dingus and Rowe suggest that all dinosaurs didn't become extinct at the K-T boundary of geologic time, destroyed by volcanic eruptions or a gigantic comet impact, as argued in Walter Alvarez's *T. Rex and the Crater of Doom* (LJ 6/15/97); instead, they evolved into birds. Reviewing past theories and findings, the authors use evidence from rock and fossil records to lend credence to their conclusions. In Part 1, they discuss two accepted scenarios: asteroid impacts vs. natural, more gradual events leading to the extinction of dinosaurs. Part 2 examines dinosaur evolution in detail, introducing the major lineages of dinosaurs. Numerous cladistic diagrams and anatomical illustrations accompany their text. Combining the details of a textbook with the narrative of a scientific detective story, this is an exceptional contribution to the study of dinosaur extinction and the implications for our own future. Highly recommended for academic libraries and larger public libraries. —Gloria Maxwell, Kansas City P.L., Kan. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

#### Review

Even some paleontologists who accept a dinosaur-bird link may balk at classifying birds as latter-day dinosaurs. But Dingus and Rowe are spirited advocates. If their richly illustrated book is perhaps too comprehensive for cover-to-cover reading, it is well organized to be used for years as a reference work on all kinds of dinosaur and bird lore. -- *The New York Times Book Review*, John Noble Wilford

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