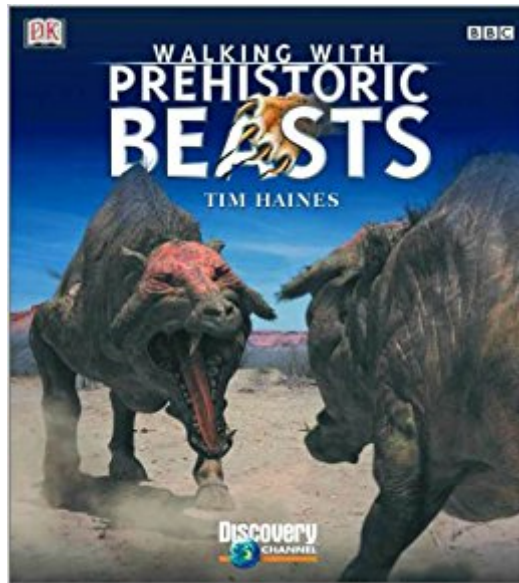




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Walking With Beasts: A Prehistoric Safari



Synopsis

Since the dinosaurs died out over 65 million years ago our planet has been dominated by mammals. A succession of bizarre evolutionary specimens have come and gone -- from walking whales to sabre-toothed cats -- yet many of these magnificent creatures have never been visualized before. Now, for the first time, spectacular and unfamiliar animals are recreated and set in the context of their world. Walking with Prehistoric Beasts reveals the extraordinary ancestors of modern mammals and the arrival of man, bringing to life the roots of our heritage. Following on from the hugely-acclaimed Walking with Dinosaurs, Walking with Prehistoric Beasts recreates the creatures and landscapes of post-dinosaur Earth; transporting us to the icy plains of the mammoth, dark forests stalked by giant carnivorous birds, and deserts dominated by 16 ton Indricotheres. From the tiny fruit-eating primate Apidium, to the powerful chalicotheres, whose curved claws forced them to walk on their knuckles, the lives of these little known creatures are vividly brought to life. Meet the bizarre hose-nosed Macrauchenia, and the Deodicurus, a giant armadillo with a spiked club for a tail; run with cat-sized horses and rhino-sized carnivorous pigs, hunt with the skull-crushing Andrewsarchus, and walk with the very first humans. Illustrated boxes describe the latest scientific evidence that led to the reconstructions of these creatures, while character boxes provide information on behavior and habitats. The text is illustrated throughout with ground-breaking computer graphic images to offer a unique record of lost worlds never seen before and reveal many of the most spectacular periods in Earth's history. Also available, accompanying the Walking with Prehistoric Beasts TV series, are books for children, home videos, a DVD, and a CD of the soundtrack from the series.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Beyond the woolly mammoth and the saber-toothed cat, most of us know very little about ancient mammals, many of which rivaled the dinosaurs in size. Haines, author of *Walking with Dinosaurs* (2000), gives an overview of these beasts in a companion volume to a Discovery Channel series. With a combination of natural history insights laid over the fossil record and computer graphics, extinct species like *Smilodon* (a saber-tooth), *Indricotherium* (enormous rhinoceros relatives), and even our ancestors *Australopithecus* come to life. Each chapter tells the story of one species, following specific individuals as they eat, mate, deal with the seasons, and interact with other species. Sidebars give paleontological data and a thumbnail sketch of each species mentioned. The chapters are in chronological order, so each presents a view of the age of mammals from a different period, culminating with woolly mammoths and *Homo sapiens*. The illustrations are spectacular, giving the feel of photographs of these extinct creatures. A section on source material provides the fossil underpinnings for the computer re-creations. Nancy Bent

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Tim Haines joined the Nature program at the BBC TV Natural History Unit in 1987 before moving to BBC TV Science. He has worked on many of the major BBC science series, and has produced a number of award-winning programs, including the Ice Mummy trilogy. He was the creator and Series Producer of *Walking with Dinosaurs*, and wrote the accompanying book. He is Executive Producer of *Walking with Prehistoric Beasts*. Daren Horley pursued a freelance career in traditional illustration before discovering the digital world. In 1997 he joined the computer animation team at Framstore where he designed and painted the skins of the animals in *Walking with Dinosaurs*. He is now Framstore's digital painting supervisor, working across a number of projects including *Walking with Prehistoric Beasts*.

My 6yr old son can be difficult to buy for (as most spectrum kids are) and declared he wanted a 'prehistoric christmas' this year. So along with a few figures and documentaries I found I wanted to get him a book he could leaf through (he loves books). I wanted a book that would entice and excite him, one that would feed his enthusiasm and eagerness to learn yet not overwhelm him--this book is

perfect!! It's bright, colorful, and concise--with fantastic pictures. There is one problem the book will undoubtedly create though--he'll now want a toy/replica of every animal featured in it! When he was 3 he taught his 17 year old cousin about the Aurora Borealis, and I have a feeling after going through this book a few times, that my now 20yr old nephew (and the rest of the cousins) will be educated on hyenadons and cave bears!!

Walking with pre-historic beasts is a fascinating journey through the Cenozoic era with beautifully illustrated pictures and photographs of the beasts and animals that roamed and dominated the earth after the death of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. 50 million years ago the earth fully recovered from the global asteroid impact and destruction that killed the dinosaurs and is now changed from dinosaur world into mammal world with tropical rainforests filled with giant birds that eat miniature horses, prehistoric whales that eat sharks, giant pig like creatures, indricotheres that live in the desert, meat eating mammals like hyenodonts and andrewsarchus, woolly mammoths, big cats like smilodon and the first early humans and primate creatures.

This book picks up where "Walking With Dinosaurs" left off, shortly after the meteorite hit Chixulub near the Yucatan and set off the cataclysmic environmental changes that wiped out most of the species then populating our planet, including all of the dinosaurs. The mammals were hit hard but rebounded with a vengeance, and by the time this book opens, after the dust had died down and the planet was again habitable, they had become the dominant life form on earth. The book takes us through several geological periods, introducing us to various species which became dominant and then extinct in their turn, up through the last great ice age in which some extinct life forms, notably the woolly mammoth and the woolly rhinoceros, interacted with a relative newcomer on the planet named homo sapiens. Haines also shows how homo sapiens descended from australopithecus, the first recognizable humanid, and how many of the social traits of the first humans were handed down through the generations to the present time. Somehow, prehistoric mammals have never generated the same kind of awe that dinosaurs have, maybe because they remind us of animals we are already familiar with, but they provide a fascinating glimpse of how life evolved down through the millenia, and just because many of them looked vaguely like animals currently on our planet, and some of them were actually contemporaneous with human beings, we can imagine what life might have been like had they hung around for a few more epochs. Imagine seeing a giant Indricothere (who looked something like a cross between an overweight giraffe and an elephant) ambling down your street; or witnessing a run-in between a sabre-tooth cat and a giant sloth (sloth wins every

time), or chasing a stray mammoth out of your yard. At the end of the book we realize that Haines' greatest achievement is in showing us that extinction has been the fate of most of the species on earth since life first began; and that we are, after all, just another species of mammal, and therefore subject to -- perhaps destined to -- extinction in our own turn.

I bought two copies of this book: one for myself and one for a 12-year-old relative. The illustrations are superb, the information secure and grounded on the latest paleontological finds, the narrative interesting...in short, one fine example of BBC expertise in documentary-making. However, there's something that has, I'm afraid, gone astray in Chapter 5, where the author, in order to arrange for a confrontation between a pride of saber-tooth tigers and a giant ground sloth, comes with the idea that ground-sloths scavenged carcasses from predators "to supplement their diet". Now, where did this come from? I've never heard the slightest hint of evidence about that, and I found this particular piece of informed guess-work somewhat aberrant, to say the least. Seems like something attuned to the necessities of more dramatic story-telling of a kind of Pleistocene telenovela - perhaps because ground-sloths lived in what today is Argentina? Outside from this (admittedly small) slip, however, the book deserves to be bought, kept and cherished, from one generation to another.

I bought this book for my 6 year old son who watches the video all the time. He was more excited about this than anything else he got for his birthday. The pictures are incredibly lifelike and the information is interesting. This was one of the best purchases I've ever made.

Informative and helpful for my grand daughter who is interested in this subject, but so am I
Andrewsarchus is my favorite mystery mammal.

great book

A very nice book about prehistoric animals and mailed in good time , good for students for a book report, and good overall information,nice pictures and colorful!!

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