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Great Transformations in Vertebrate Evolution

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Great Transformations in Vertebrate Evolution

Great Transformations in Vertebrate Evolution
How did flying birds evolve from running dinosaurs, terrestrial trotting tetrapods evolve from swimming fish, and whales return to swim in the sea? These are some of the great transformations in the 500-million-year history of vertebrate life. And with the aid of new techniques and approaches across a range of fields—work spanning multiple levels of biological organization from DNA sequences to organs and the physiology and ecology of whole organisms—we are now beginning to unravel the confounding evolutionary mysteries contained in the structure, genes, and fossil record of every living species.

This book gathers a diverse team of renowned scientists to capture the excitement of these new discoveries in a collection that is both accessible to students and an important contribution to the future of its field. Marshaling a range of disciplines—from paleobiology to phylogenetics, developmental biology, ecology, and evolutionary biology—the contributors attack particular transformations in the head and neck, trunk, appendages such as fins and limbs, and the whole body, as well as offer synthetic perspectives. Illustrated throughout, *Great Transformations in Vertebrate Evolution* not only reveals the true origins of whales with legs, fish with elbows, wrists, and necks, and feathered dinosaurs, but also the relevance to our lives today of these extraordinary narratives of change.

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