

Drumheller Mail
Wednesday 10 October 2012

SECTION A - TheDrumhellerMail.com

Tyrrell turtle book foundation for future research

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The Drumheller Mail

The Royal Tyrrell Museum has once again released a book that serves as a cornerstone for future palaeontological research.

Morphology and Evolution of Turtles, a huge tome containing research into fossil and modern turtles, was released recently and, though it may not be intended for the lay person, it will be a must have for any palaeontologist or aspiring amateur.

"It's directed towards researchers and students, both palaeontologists and people working on recent turtles," said Dr. Don Brinkman, Director of Preservation and Research at the Tyrrell Museum and a world renowned expert on fossil turtles. "There's a lot of basic information that's going to be referred to in later papers. The faunal reviews especially tie a lot of different information together."

The book also has a unique, personal touch from Brinkman. The cover art was taken from the very first painting he had done. Each year staff at the Tyrrell Museum do a skills auction where staff offer their services, such as

painting lessons, as a fundraiser for the museum's social club.

Brinkman won some painting lessons. Up until that point, he had never painted. His first painting was of a sea turtle on a beach, making its way to the ocean.

"This was the first painting that came out of it," said Brinkman. "Jim saw it and thought it'd be a good candidate for a cover. It's a little heavy on the symbolism, but it works."

The original painting currently resides in Brinkman's office at the Tyrrell Museum.

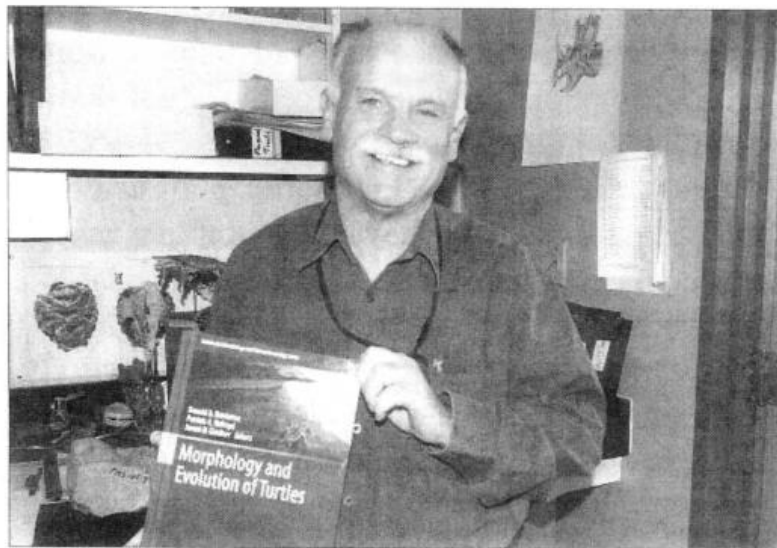
The book is divided into different papers written by turtle experts from around the world. Topics range from the evolutionary origins of turtles, to describing a number of new species of fossil turtles, to looking at how the turtles fit into the ecosystems they were a part of.

Work on the book started in 2009 with the Turtle Symposium, one of the Tyrrell Museum's biannual symposia. Researchers from all over the world came to Drumheller to discuss fossil turtles for several days. The book was made as a lasting legacy of that meeting.

Brinkman and fellow Tyrrell Museum researcher Jim Gardener have spent the subsequent years collecting and editing the articles. Brinkman credited Gardener with doing most of the editing.

The museum has already

scheduled its next symposium. Unlike previous symposia, which focused on a group of animals or a specific fossil site, this one will delve into fossil preparation. The symposium is scheduled for April 2013.



Dr. Don Brinkman, Director of Preservation and Research at the Royal Tyrrell Museum, holds up the new book he and fellow Tyrrell scientist Dr. Jim Gardener put together. The book contains papers from experts on fossil and living turtles and will be a must have for any researcher or student looking at turtles. The cover art, depicting a turtle crawling to the ocean, is Brinkman's first painting ever.

mailphoto by Michael James

Morphology and Evolution of Turtles

Brinkman, D.B.; Holroyd, P.A.; Gardner, J.D. (Eds.)

2013, XIX, 577 p. 239 illus., 7 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-94-007-4308-3