



# The Animal Kingdom: A Very Short Introduction

By Peter Holland

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## The Animal Kingdom: A Very Short Introduction By Peter Holland

The animal world is immensely diverse, and our understanding of it has been greatly enhanced by molecular biology and the study of evolution and development ("evo-devo"). Moreover, groundbreaking research on genes, and especially key families of genes such as the Homeobox genes which control the development of body plans, has led to radical changes in the classification of animals. In this *Very Short Introduction*, Peter Holland presents a cutting-edge tour of the animal kingdom, providing an authoritative summary of the modern view of animal life, its origins, and the new classification resulting from DNA studies. Beginning with the definition of animals (not obvious in biological terms), Holland takes the reader through the revolutionary new high-level groupings of animals (phyla) based on evolutionary relationships and ancestry. Ranging from corals and sponges to nematodes, sea squirts, and vertebrates, and illuminating many key topics in zoology, this fascinating, brief overview will be of great value to all students of the life sciences as well as providing a concise summary for the interested lay reader.

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About the Author

**Peter Holland** is Linacre Professor of Zoology and Fellow of Merton College, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford.

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