

Evolution of the animals – a Linnean tercentenary celebration

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How the great diversity of animal forms evolved is a major question of biology. The papers from this discussion meeting describe the latest research into both the pattern and the processes of animal evolution. Understanding the pattern involves reconstructing the tree of relationships of major groups of animals, discovering when major groups of animals appeared and hence when innovations such as legs and eyes and wings evolved.

To understand the process of evolution, specific characters are being studied to decipher the evolutionary changes in the animal's genes that resulted in the evolution of these novel structures. The papers in this issue cover the origins and relationships of major groups of animals, our attempts to reconstruct the common ancestor of all animals and the evolution of key characteristics including segments and wings.

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