

Animal Classification

We divide the animal kingdom into two groups: **Vertebrates and Invertebrates**

Vertebrates are animals with a spine column or a backbone inside their bodies. Fish, dogs and humans are examples of vertebrates.

Invertebrates: do not have a skeleton. Some examples of these are spiders, flies and caterpillars.

Vertebrates are often larger and have more complex bodies than invertebrates. However, there are many more invertebrates than vertebrates.

Warm-blooded (or endothermic) vertebrates are types of animals that regulate their own body temperature and they normally have layers of fat, feathers or fur. Mammals and birds are warm-blooded.

Cold-blooded (or ectothermic) depend on their surroundings¹ to keep their body temperature. When there is no sun, and the air is cold, the animal gets cold. When it is sunny and hot, the animal gets hot, and generally more active.



¹ "Surroundings" means "ambiente"

Vertebrates

Fish breathe through gills, and live in water; most are cold-blooded and lay eggs (sharks are fish, but they give birth to live² young).

Amphibians are cold-blooded and live both on land (breathing with lungs) and in water (breathing through gills) at different times. Three types of amphibians are frogs and toads, salamanders, and caecilians. Caecilians are primitive amphibians that resemble earthworms. They are found in the tropics.



Reptiles are cold-blooded and breathe with lungs. They have scales, and most lay eggs. Reptiles include snakes, turtles and tortoises, crocodiles and alligators, and lizards. Dinosaurs were reptiles, although some scientists believe that some were warm blooded.

Birds are warm-blooded animals with feathers and wings. They lay eggs, and most can fly (although many, including penguins and ostriches, can not fly).

Mammals are warm-blooded, and are nourished by their mothers' milk; most are born live³ (however, the platypus lays eggs). Most mammals also have body hair.

² & ³ "live" is an adjective and means "vivo"



Invertebrates

Arthropods are the largest and most diverse of all animal groups. They have segmented bodies supported by a hard external skeleton (or exoskeleton). Arthropods include insects, arachnids (spiders and their relatives), centipedes, millipedes, and crustaceans like crabs, lobsters, and shrimp.

Sponges are the most primitive of animal groups. They live in water (usually saltwater), are sessile (do not move from place to place), and filter tiny organisms out of the water for food.

Coelenterates are also very primitive. Some coelenterates are jellyfish, corals, and sea anemones.

Echinoderms include starfish, sea urchins, and sea cucumbers. They live in seawater and have external skeletons.

Worms come in many varieties and live in all sorts of habitats — from the bottom of the ocean to the inside of other animals.

Mollusks are soft-bodied animals which often live in hard shells. They are the second-largest group of invertebrates, with 50,000 living species. They include snails, slugs, octopus, squid, mussels, oysters, etc.

