



# The Evolution of Primary Sexual Characters in Animals

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Primary sexual traits, those structures and processes directly involved in reproduction, are some of the most diverse, specialized, and bizarre in the animal kingdom. Moreover, reproductive traits are often species-specific, suggesting that they evolved very rapidly. This diversity, long the province of taxonomists, has recently attracted broader interest from evolutionary biologists, especially those interested in sexual selection and the evolution of reproductive strategies. Primary sexual characters were long assumed to be the product of natural selection, exclusively. A recent alternative suggests that sexual selection explains much of the diversity of primary sexual characters. A third approach to the evolution of reproductive interactions after copulation or insemination has been to consider the process one of sexual conflict. That is, the reproductive processes of a species may reflect, as does the mating system, evolution acting on males and on females, but in different directions. In this volume, authors explore a wide variety of primary sexual characters and selective pressures that have shaped them, from natural selection for offspring survival to species-isolating mechanisms, sperm competition, cryptic female choice and sexual arms races. Exploring diverse reproductive adaptations from a theoretical and practical perspective, *The Evolution of Primary Sexual Characters* will provide an unparalleled overview of sexual diversity in many taxa and an introduction to the issues in sexual selection that are changing our view of sexual processes.

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