

Animal Classifications Fact Sheet

All of these animals have something in common: they are all vertebrates. That means they have a vertebrae or backbone. Still, the animal kingdom is wildly diverse. That's why scientists have classified animals into distinct groups based on shared traits. Classification makes it easier to find, identify and study animals.

Mammals

- * warm-blooded
- * have hair or fur
- * give birth to live young
- * mothers nurse their young with milk
- * have lungs to breathe
- * mammals that live on land have 4 limbs, (2 arms and 2 legs; or 4 legs)

Mammal Examples: human, monkey, cat, dog, bat, bear, giraffe, deer, pig, cow, kangaroo, rabbit, horse, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, skunk, whale, seal, dolphin, sea lion, otter

Birds

- * warm-blooded
- * wings and feathers
- * 2 legs
- * lay hard shelled eggs
- * ear holes instead of ears
- * have a beak, no teeth
- * most have hollow bones
- * most can fly, but some can not fly
- * flightless birds include, ostrich, emu, penguin, kiwi, cassowary, rhea, dodo

Bird Examples: eagle, robin, turkey, owl, parrot, vulture, dove, sparrow

Fish

- * cold-blooded
- * have scales
- * swim with fins
- * breathe with gills
- * lay millions of soft tiny eggs
- * live entire life underwater
- * freshwater fish live in lakes, streams and rivers
- * saltwater fish live in oceans and salty lakes

Freshwater Fish Examples: salmon, trout, catfish, bass

Saltwater Fish Examples: tuna, cod, flounder, halibut, shark, seahorse, puffer fish

Reptiles

- * cold-blooded
- * dry skin with scales
- * many kinds molt (shed their skin)
- * usually lay rubbery eggs
- * 4 legs or no legs
- * ear holes instead of ears
- * have lungs to breathe
- * live in oceans and on land
- * live on all continents except Antarctica

Reptile Examples: snake, turtle, lizard, crocodile, alligator, chameleon, gecko, iguana, komodo dragon, cobra, boa

Amphibians

- * cold-blooded
- * smooth moist skin
- * lay thousands of small jell-like eggs
- * many hatch in water
- * many begin life as tadpoles
- * breathe with gills then form lungs
- * metamorphosis
- * develop 4 legs
- * webbed feet
- * live on land and in water

Amphibian Examples: frogs, toads, newt, salamanders