

Animals: How Do We Tell Them Apart?

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0 There are over one million kinds or species of animals on our earth.
13 With that many species of animals, it was important for scientists to find
26 some way to group the species in order to tell them apart. After studying
40 many different ways, scientists decided to use bones as the first big way
53 to group animals.

56 If an animal has its bones inside its body, including a backbone, it
69 belongs in the group called vertebrates. If an animal has no bones inside
82 its body and does not have a backbone, it belongs to the group called
96 invertebrates. If you think about bones and whether or not a particular
108 animal has them, you will always know whether an animal is a vertebrate
121 or an invertebrate. For example, the bear, the cow, and the alligator are
134 vertebrates because their bones are inside their bodies. They also have a
146 backbone. On the other hand, the jellyfish, the fly, and the earthworm are
159 all invertebrates because they have no bones inside their bodies and no
171 backbones. There are many more invertebrates than vertebrates on our
181 earth.

182 After scientists decided on these two main groups for classifying
192 animals, they then made other decisions. They looked at each group
203 separately. They then further divided the two big groups into smaller
214 groups by looking at other differences. For example, one group of
225 vertebrates was called mammals because the mother feeds her babies
235 with milk from her body. If vertebrates have feathers and have wings,
247 they are a group called birds. If vertebrates have dry skin and scales, they
261 belong to the reptile group. But because they all have bones inside their
274 bodies, they all belong to the large group called vertebrates.
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