

Preface

We have developed this book around two fundamental themes. The first eight chapters of Section A of this book are devoted to a class-wise discussion of Chordates evolution and classification. Fairly detailed taxonomic synopsis for each class is included in each chapter. We have used a combination of phylogenetic trees (Cladograms) and explained narrative discussions to talk about animal evolution. The Cladograms are used where appropriate, because they provide the least ambiguous statements that can be proposed about animal relationships. Unless otherwise indicated, the classification in each chapter deals only with extant taxa. However, We have discussed molecular-based hypotheses that have received widespread attention. We hope that Section A of this book will make this seemingly overwhelming task a bit more manageable.

The Section B deals with the comparative anatomy. This section is updated and has not been modified much, because it deals with the study involving the structural pattern and the influence of evolutionary design. In this section the structure function concept at the level of organs and organ system is fundamental to our understanding of comparative morphology. It is upon these interrelated aspects—structure, function and evolution—that we have arranged and presented the diversity of vertebrate organisation of each organ system.

We are extremely grateful to those authors of the textbooks and research papers we have freely consulted, and used the available information and data in the respective chapters of the book. In spite of our best efforts and critical screening of the text in the book at all levels, there might have crept in certain unnoticed errors. We shall be obliged if the readers point out those to us for corrections in the subsequent editions.

Any suggestions and criticism from the readers for the improvement of the text will be highly appreciated.

Authors

“Were I to await perfection, my book would never be finished.”

– Tai Tung