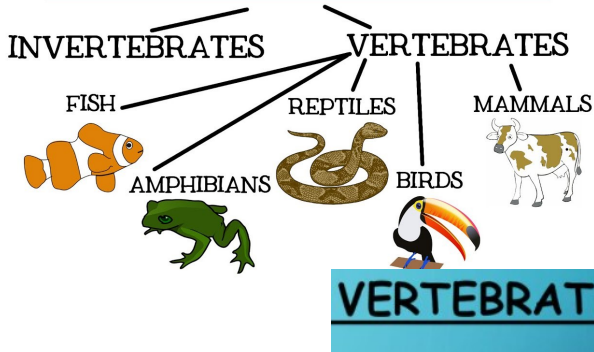


Invertebrates - animals without a backbone.

Vertebrates - animals with a backbone. The animals have been divided into two groups based on the presence or absence of a backbone. The backbone is the observable feature that defines whether the animal is a vertebrate or an invertebrate.



ANIMAL CLASSIFICATION



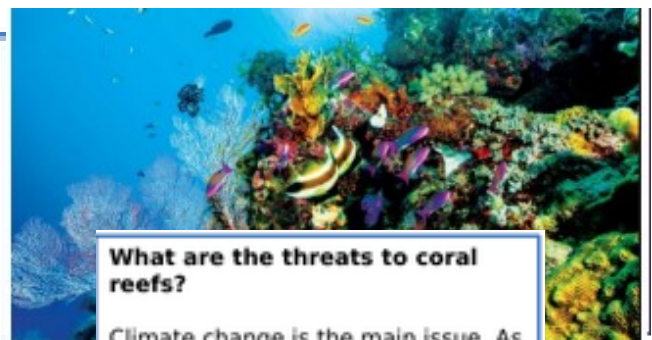
Stingrays are fish.

Stingray facts

1. Rays and *skates* are flattened fish closely related to sharks.
2. These guys are pretty unique as they have no bones in their body - their skeleton is made up of flexible *cartilage*.
3. Although they look near identical, rays and *skates* are actually different. Stingrays are *ovoviviparous*, meaning the young are hatched from *eggs* that are held within the body, whereas *skates* are *oviparous*, meaning they lay eggs - these eggs are protected by a hard, rectangular case often called a "mermaid's purse"!
4. There are many different types of ray including *stingrays*, *electric rays*, *butterfly rays*, *round rays*, *manta rays*, *guitarfish* and *sawfish*.

Where are the coral reefs?

Coral reefs are found in warm parts of the world. Some key places are the Caribbean, north east of Australia and around Indonesia.



What are the threats to coral reefs?

Climate change is the main issue. As the seas around the world warm up, the coral dies and becomes bleached (it turns white - see the photo).

Pollution from chemicals washed into the sea, or oil spills from boats.

Over-fishing, which is where local fisherman drop their anchors onto the coral, or tourists visiting the coral stand on it.



▲ Coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Sea temperatures over the reef were the highest on record this February. There are fears the world's tropical coral reefs may have reached a tipping point of bleaching nearly every year. Photograph: Nature Picture Library/Alamy Stock Photo