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Introduction: The purpose of this text is to compile anatomical data for a handbook that deals with the post-oesophageal digestive tract of eutherian mammals. Over-specialisation should be avoided. Consideration of older scientific literature is not obsolete, but it should inform about the long tradition of often surprisingly exact anatomical studies, which have been partly forgotten and are therefore often not taken into account by modern researchers. Present-day knowledge of form and function of organ systems should keep in mind that insights are the product of a continuous evolutionary diversification. Therefore, it is necessary not only to describe anatomical complexity, but also to consider – if possible – morphological and functional developments.

Outline of the following text

The text will cover 30 eutherian taxa – orders and suborders – that are listed in Tab. 1.1. The system of numbering is as follow: Illustrations and tables of the “Introductory remarks” start with “1”, the superorder Afrotheria with “2”, and those referring to the superorders Xenarthra, Euarchontoglires and Laurasiatheria with “3”, “4” and “5”; the number “6” can be found at the beginning of numbers illustrating the “General discussion”. The following numbers identify the consecutive sequence of figures within the superorders.

In chapters that deal with the anatomy of the gastrointestinal tract of different eutherian orders, the taxonomy and phylogeny together with accounts of biogeography, as well as food characteristics, are discussed. Scientific names of genera and species, as well as their common English names, will be taken from Wilson and Reeder (2005). Often, the original authors use a nomenclature that is now obsolete and will be avoided in this text. Artiodactyla and Cetacea are now grouped together as Cetartiodactyla. The two “historical” terms are still well established in the literature.

1 An appreciation of exemplary investigators – past and present

An effort like the present treatise is based on the cumulative scientific production of many investigators, who are listed in the table of references. In addition, a small group of investigators has made extraordinary contributions to our knowledge of the anatomy of the gastrointestinal



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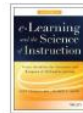
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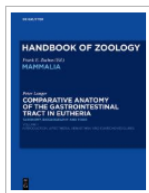
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Description

This volume of the series Handbook of Zoology deals with the anatomy of the gastrointestinal digestive tract - stomach, small intestine, caecum and colon - in all eutherian orders and suborders. It presents compilations of anatomical studies, as well as an extensive list of references, which makes widely dispersed literature accessible. Introductory sections to orders and suborders give notice to biologists, taxonomists, biogeographers and Show more

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Introductory remarks, Xenarthra in general

According to Coombs (1983), the recent Xenarthra include animals with a wide range of habits: from digging, as developed in modern armadillos such as *Priodontes*, to climbing (= scansorial, for example, in *Bradypus*, *Choloepus*, Nyakatura et al., 2010), with some representatives capable of both terrestrial and arboreal locomotion (*Tamandua*). Diets range from insects and other animal matter to leaves and twigs. The sloths throughout their evolution seem to have been a plant-eating group. There is now little support for the establishment of a close relationship between Xenarthra and the Pholidota (pangolins) in a superorder Edentata (Rose and Emry, 1993); Xenarthra and Pholidota have to be separated (Shoshani and McKenna, 1998), based on morphological criteria and molecular data.

According to the account presented by Vizcaino and Loughry (2008), Xenarthra evolved two distinct orders within this superorder: (1) the Cingulata, exemplified by modern-day armadillos, which are noted for the armour covering their head, body, and tail, and their minimal, peglike teeth, and (2) the Pilosa, comprising

most of the Tertiary (Delsuc et al., 2001; McDonald and Naples, 2008). "Xenarthrans retain a large suite of purportedly primitive features" (Gaudin and Croft, 2015, page 623). The most basal xenarthrans were myrmecophageous diggers and/or burrowers, perhaps with some climbing facility. "The ecological diversification of Xenarthrans from a myrmecophagous ancestry into a variety of other dietary niches (herbivory, omnivory, and even carnivory) is another unique feature of this highly unusual clade" (page 630).

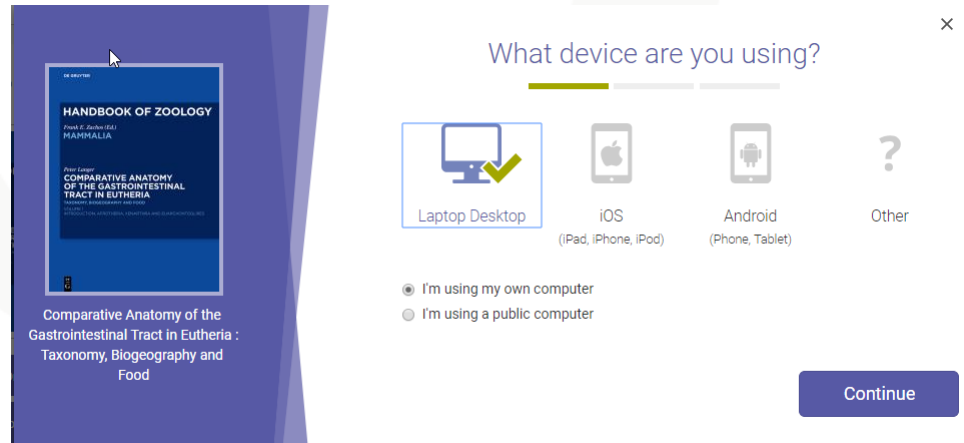
Wilson and Reeder (2005) give the following information on the quantitative composition of the superorder Xenarthra: There are two orders: the Cingulata (Armadillos) are grouped in one family with 9 genera and 21 species. However, Superina and Loughry (2015) write, based on Abba et al. (2015): "...the Andean hairy armadillo, *Chaetophractus nationi*, is in fact not a distinct species but rather a high-altitude variant of *C. vellerosus*" (page 619). This means that there are now 20 species of armadillos, reducing the total number of xenarthran species to 30 instead of 31. The second order, Pilosa, comprises two suborders, the



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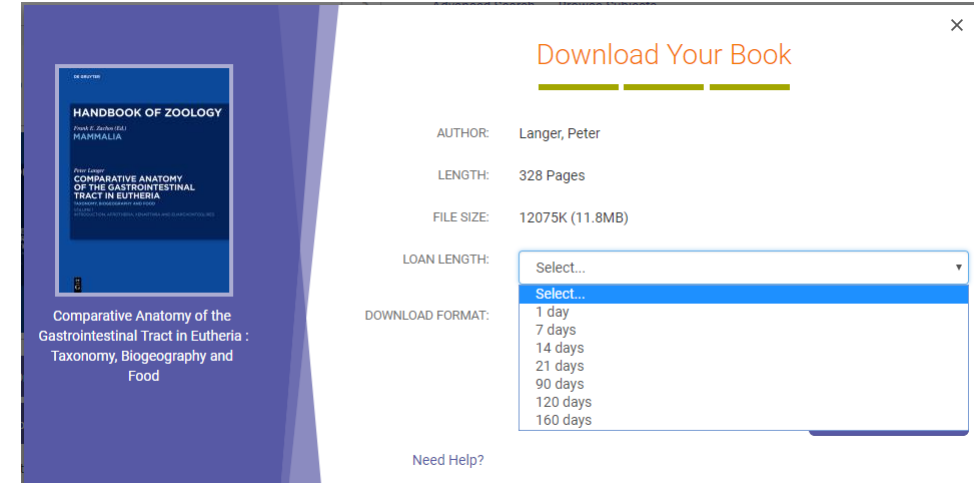


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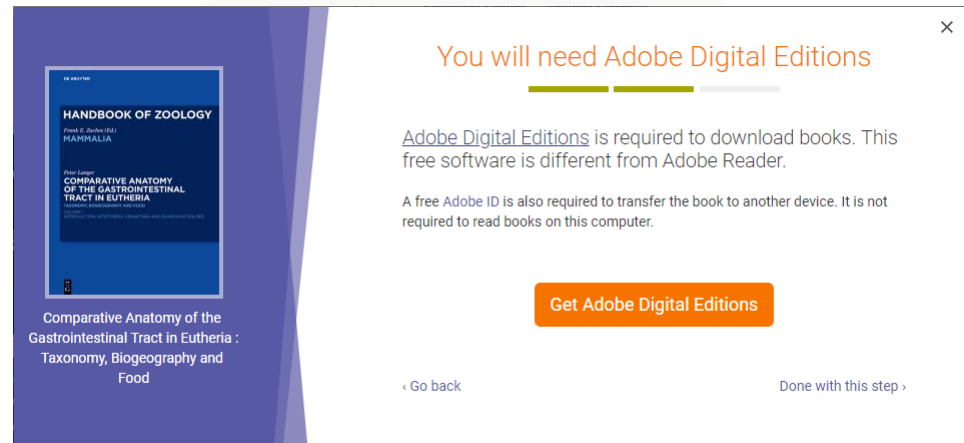
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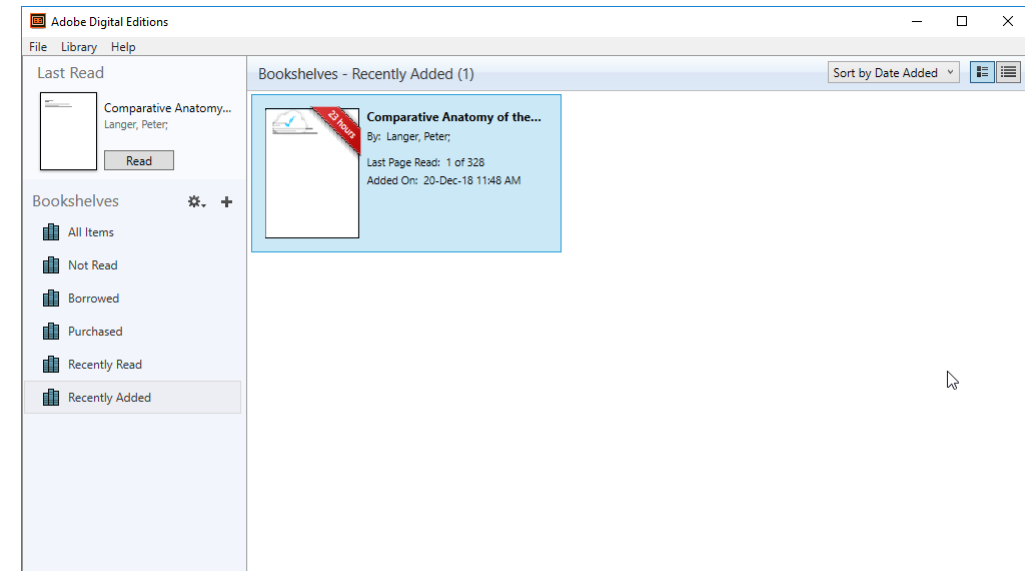
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