



# Mammal Teeth

*Peter S. Ungar*

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## **Mammal Teeth** Peter S. Ungar

In this unique book, Peter S. Ungar tells the story of mammalian teeth from their origin through their evolution to their current diversity.

Mammal Teeth traces the evolutionary history of teeth, beginning with the very first mineralized vertebrate structures half a billion years ago. Ungar describes how the simple conical tooth of early vertebrates became the molars, incisors, and other forms we see in mammals today. Evolutionary adaptations changed pointy teeth into flatter ones, with specialized shapes designed to complement the corresponding jaw.

Ungar explains tooth structure and function in the context of nutritional needs. The myriad tooth shapes produced by evolution offer different solutions to the fundamental problem of how to squeeze as many nutrients as possible out of foods. The book also highlights Ungar's own path-breaking studies that show how microwear analysis can help us understand ancient diets.

The final part of the book provides an in-depth examination of mammalian teeth today, surveying all orders in the class, family by family. Ungar describes some of the more bizarre teeth, such as tusks, and the mammal diversity that accompanies these morphological wonders.

Mammal Teeth captures the evolution of mammals, including humans, through the prism of dental change. Synthesizing decades of research, Ungar reveals the interconnections among mammal diet, dentition, and evolution. His book is a must-read for paleontologists, mammalogists, and anthropologists.

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