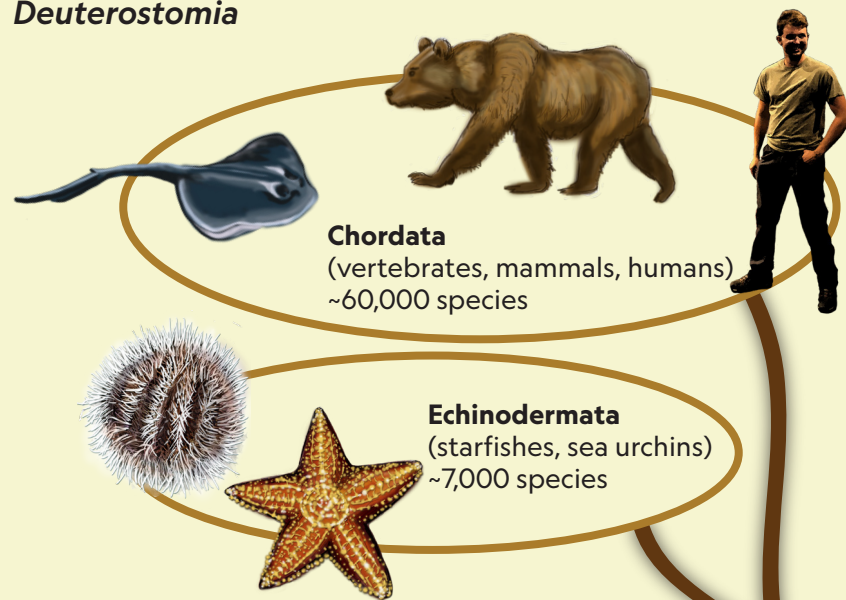


THE TREE OF LIFE

A phylogenetic tree shows the evolutionary relationships among different organisms. The branches of the tree show where genetic or physical similarities and differences between organisms begin or end.

A phylogenetic tree is like a family tree. The root of the tree represents a distant ancestor of the species that appear at the ends of the branches. The branches separate at nodes, or points where ancestral lines split into new lines of evolution.

Deuterostomia



This tree of life shows the relationships among common groups of animals. The main branch in this tree, which separates the animals into two distinct groups, *Deuterostomia* and *Protostomia*, split about seven hundred million years ago. This tree shows how today's animal species have diverged over time from common ancestors.

~700 million years ago

Protostomia

