

## Commentary

# The Anthropoid Primates: Our Closest Relatives in the Animal Kingdom

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### Description

The term “anthropoid” may sound like a term from a science fiction novel, but in reality, it refers to a diverse and intriguing group of primates that includes our closest relatives: Monkeys, apes, and humans. These creatures share common ancestry and possess remarkable similarities, making them a subject of great scientific interest and a source of wonder for people across the globe. In this article, we’ll delve into the captivating world of anthropoids, exploring their characteristics, evolution, and significance. Anthropoids belong to the suborder anthropoid which can be divided into two main groups (New World monkeys) and (Old World monkeys, apes, and humans). These primates are characterized by a suite of distinctive features, including forward-facing eyes with stereoscopic vision, grasping hands and feet with opposable thumbs, and complex social behaviours. These traits are adaptations that have allowed anthropoids to thrive in various environments around the world. The evolutionary history of anthropoids is an intricate puzzle that scientists have been piecing together through fossil discoveries and genetic analyses. The origins of anthropoids are believed to date back to the Eocene epoch, around 56 to 33.9 million years ago. The early anthropoids were small, tree-dwelling creatures that likely resembled modern-day tarsiers. Over time, these early forms diversified and gave rise to the wide array of anthropoid species we see today. Within the anthropoid subgroup, the family Hominidae comprises great apes and humans. This family includes orangutans, gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos, and *Homo sapiens* (modern humans). Humans share a common ancestor with these great apes, and studying their behaviours, genetics, and anatomy provides valuable insights into our own evolutionary journey. Anthropoids, particularly the apes, display remarkable social complexity and intelligence. Chimpanzees, for example, are known to use tools for

various purposes, such as extracting termites from mounds or cracking nuts. They also exhibit intricate social hierarchies, cooperation, and even cultural behaviours, such as different groups using distinct grooming techniques. These behaviours offer glimpses into the cognitive abilities and emotional lives of our primate cousins. Despite their intriguing characteristics, many anthropoid species face significant threats due to habitat loss, poaching, and other human-driven factors. Conservation efforts are crucial to ensuring the survival of these remarkable creatures and the ecosystems they inhabit. Organizations around the world work tirelessly to protect their habitats, conduct research, and educate the public about the importance of preserving the rich biodiversity of our planet. The fascination with anthropoids extends beyond the realm of scientific research. They have made their mark in literature, film, and art. From the adventurous tales of Tarzan swinging through the jungle to the scientifically grounded portrayals of ape behaviour in documentaries like “Jane,” these creatures captivate our imagination and offer us a unique perspective on our own existence. Anthropoids are not just subjects of scientific inquiry; they are a testament to the intricate web of life on Earth. Their behaviours, adaptations, and evolutionary history remind us that we are part of a larger story, deeply connected to the natural world and the creatures that inhabit it. Exploring the world of anthropoids encourages us to reflect on our own place in the tapestry of life and to appreciate the remarkable diversity of life forms that call our planet home.

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### Conflict of Interest

None.