



Genes, Categories, and Species: The Evolutionary and Cognitive Cause of the Species Problem

Jody Hey

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In *Genes, Categories and Species*, Jody Hey provides an enlightening new solution to one of biology's most ironic and perplexing puzzles.

When Darwin showed that life evolves, and that it does so by natural selection, he transformed our understanding of living things. But the very question Darwin addressed-the nature of species-continues to pose an awkward conundrum for biologists. Despite enormous efforts by a great many scholars, biologists still cannot agree on how to identify species or even how to define the word "species."

Genes, Categories, and Species is not like other books on the species problem, for it does not begin by asking, "What is a species?" Instead, it focuses on the very fact that biologists are stumped by species and their curious behavior in coping with that uncertainty.

Faced with a persistent conundrum-and no lack of data on the subject-biologists who ponder the species problem have ceased to ask the most essential of scientific questions: "What new information do we need to resolve the problem?" This is the question that motivates this book and leads to the discoveries it reveals. The answer to the species problem lies not with the processes and patterns of biological diversity, Hey contends, but rather in the way the human mind perceives and categorizes that diversity.

The promise of this book is twofold. First, it allows biologists to understand the causes of the species problem and to use this knowledge to avoid the major confusions that arise over species. Second, with its explanation of the species problem, it gives scholars and students of human nature a humbling example of how ill-suited the human mind is for certain kinds of scientific questions.

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