

INTRODUCTION

The development of the biological sciences has been largely through the observational method. In the nineteenth century descriptive biologists came to occupy a preeminent and leading position in the field of biology. With the advent of the twentieth century, however, biology began to emphasize the experimental; and today, biology is an experimental science in practically all of its branches. However, experimentation in animal biology has very largely concentrated on a relatively few species which have come to be classic. These animals were selected because of their tractability and availability, and because of the fund of existing knowledge about them. Therefore, animal experimental biology has been largely oriented around the dog, cat, rabbit, mouse, guinea pig, and white rat. Despite the fact that again and again it has become obvious that there are wide varieties of metabolic patterns and inter-specific differences in physiology as well as morphology, the bulk of experimentation continues to be done with relatively few classic types. Despite this concentration of effort, over the years numerous researchers have investigated the use of different animals for experimental purposes, including mammals ranging from aardvarks to zebras.

The writings of these investigators, however, are scattered widely both in literature and in time, making it difficult for an experimental biologist to draw on the fund of already available knowledge about animals other than those most frequently used. The basic thesis guiding the preparation of "Physiological Mammalogy" has been to make available to the experimental biologist the wealth of data in the work of widely geographically scattered research scientists of diverse experimental interests.