

CHAPTER 43

Animal Reproduction and Development



Figure 43.1 Female seahorses produce eggs for reproduction that are then fertilized by the male. Unlike almost all other animals, the male seahorse then gestates the young until birth. (credit: modification of work by "cliff1066"/Flickr)

INTRODUCTION Animal reproduction is necessary for the survival of a species. In the animal kingdom, there are innumerable ways that species reproduce. Asexual reproduction produces genetically identical organisms (clones), whereas in sexual reproduction, the genetic material of two individuals combines to produce offspring that are genetically different from their parents. During sexual reproduction the male gamete (sperm) may be placed inside the female's body for internal fertilization, or the sperm and eggs may be released into the environment for external fertilization. Seahorses, like the one shown in [Figure 43.1](#), provide an example of the latter. Following a mating dance, the female lays eggs in the male seahorse's abdominal brood pouch where they are fertilized. The eggs hatch and the offspring develop in the pouch for several weeks.

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43.1 Reproduction Methods

By the end of this section, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe advantages and disadvantages of asexual and sexual reproduction
- Discuss asexual reproduction methods
- Discuss sexual reproduction methods

Animals produce offspring through asexual and/or sexual reproduction. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages. **Asexual reproduction** produces offspring that are genetically identical to the parent because the offspring are all clones of the original parent. A single individual can produce offspring asexually and large numbers of offspring can be produced quickly. In a stable or predictable environment, asexual reproduction is an effective means of reproduction because all the offspring will be adapted to that environment. In an unstable or unpredictable environment asexually-reproducing species may be at a disadvantage because all the offspring are genetically identical and may not have the genetic variation to survive in new or different conditions. On the other hand, the rapid rates of asexual reproduction may allow for a speedy response to environmental changes if individuals have mutations. An additional advantage of asexual reproduction is that colonization of new habitats may be easier when an individual does not need to find a mate to reproduce.

During **sexual reproduction** the genetic material of two individuals is combined to produce genetically diverse offspring that differ from their parents. The genetic diversity of sexually produced offspring is thought to give species a better chance of surviving in an unpredictable or changing environment. Species that reproduce sexually must maintain two different types of individuals, males and females, which can limit the ability to colonize new habitats as both sexes must be present.

Asexual Reproduction

Asexual reproduction occurs in prokaryotic microorganisms (bacteria) and in some eukaryotic single-celled and multi-celled organisms. There are a number of ways that animals reproduce asexually.

Fission

Fission, also called binary fission, occurs in prokaryotic microorganisms and in some invertebrate, multi-celled organisms. After a period of growth, an organism splits into two separate organisms. Some unicellular eukaryotic organisms undergo binary fission by mitosis. In other organisms, part of the individual separates and forms a second individual. This process occurs, for example, in many asteroid echinoderms through splitting of the central disk. Some sea anemones and some coral polyps ([Figure 43.2](#)) also reproduce through fission.



Figure 43.2 Coral polyps reproduce asexually by fission. (credit: G. P. Schmahl, NOAA FGBNMS Manager)

Budding

Budding is a form of asexual reproduction that results from the outgrowth of a part of a cell or body region

leading to a separation from the original organism into two individuals. Budding occurs commonly in some invertebrate animals such as corals and hydras. In hydras, a bud forms that develops into an adult and breaks away from the main body, as illustrated in [Figure 43.3](#), whereas in coral budding, the bud does not detach and multiplies as part of a new colony.

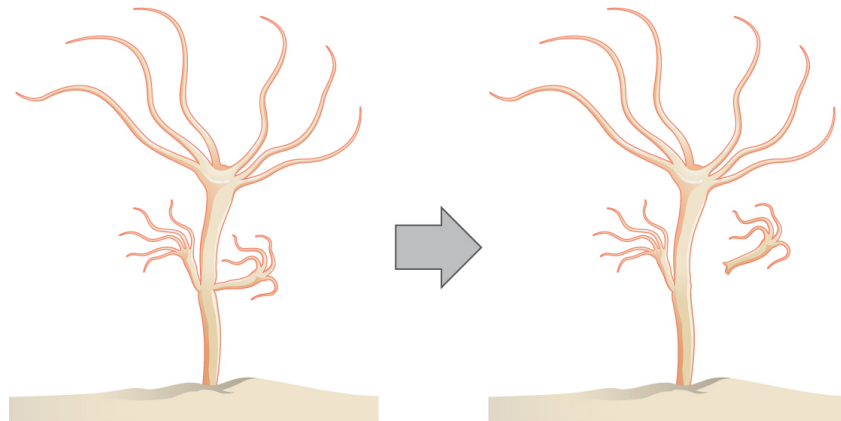


Figure 43.3 Hydra reproduce asexually through budding.

LINK TO LEARNING

Watch a video of a hydra budding.

[Click to view content \(https://www.openstax.org/l/budding_hydra\)](https://www.openstax.org/l/budding_hydra)

Fragmentation

Fragmentation is the breaking of the body into two parts with subsequent regeneration. If the animal is capable of fragmentation, and the part is big enough, a separate individual will regrow.

For example, in many sea stars, asexual reproduction is accomplished by fragmentation. [Figure 43.4](#) illustrates a sea star for which an arm of the individual is broken off and regenerates a new sea star. Fisheries workers have been known to try to kill the sea stars eating their clam or oyster beds by cutting them in half and throwing them back into the ocean. Unfortunately for the workers, the two parts can each regenerate a new half, resulting in twice as many sea stars to prey upon the oysters and clams. Fragmentation also occurs in annelid worms, turbellarians, and poriferans.

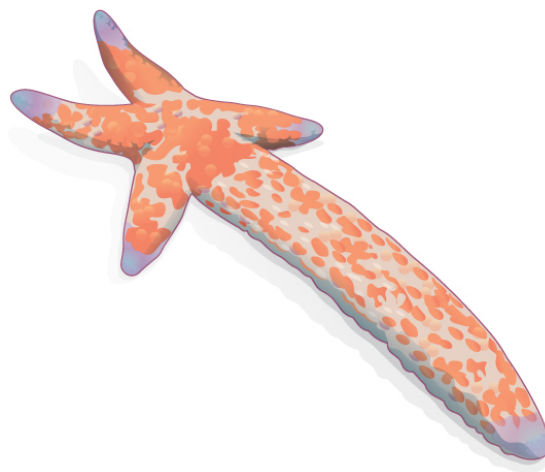


Figure 43.4 Sea stars can reproduce through fragmentation. The large arm, a fragment from another sea star, is developing into a new individual.

Note that in fragmentation, there is generally a noticeable difference in the size of the individuals, whereas in fission, two individuals of approximate size are formed.

Parthenogenesis

Parthenogenesis is a form of asexual reproduction where an egg develops into a complete individual without being fertilized. The resulting offspring can be either haploid or diploid, depending on the process and the species. Parthenogenesis occurs in invertebrates such as water fleas, rotifers, aphids, stick insects, some ants, wasps, and bees. Bees use parthenogenesis to produce haploid males (drones). If eggs are fertilized, diploid females develop, and if the fertilized eggs are fed a special diet (so called royal jelly), a queen is produced.

Some vertebrate animals—such as certain reptiles, amphibians, and fish—also reproduce through parthenogenesis. Although more common in plants, parthenogenesis has been observed in animal species that were segregated by sex in terrestrial or marine zoos. Two female Komodo dragons, a hammerhead shark, and a blacktip shark have produced parthenogenic young when the females have been isolated from males.

Sexual Reproduction

Sexual reproduction is the combination of (usually haploid) reproductive cells from two individuals to form a third (usually diploid) unique offspring. Sexual reproduction produces offspring with novel combinations of genes. This can be an adaptive advantage in unstable or unpredictable environments. As humans, we are used to thinking of animals as having two separate sexes—male and female—determined at conception. However, in the animal kingdom, there are many variations on this theme.

Hermaphroditism

Hermaphroditism occurs in animals where one individual has both male and female reproductive parts. Invertebrates such as earthworms, slugs, tapeworms and snails, shown in [Figure 43.5](#), are often hermaphroditic. Hermaphrodites may self-fertilize or may mate with another of their species, fertilizing each other and both producing offspring. Self fertilization is common in animals that have limited mobility or are not motile, such as barnacles and clams.



Figure 43.5 Many snails are hermaphrodites. When two individuals mate, they can produce up to one hundred eggs each. (credit: Assaf Shtilman)

Sex Determination

Mammalian sex determination is determined genetically by the presence of X and Y chromosomes. Individuals homozygous for X (XX) are female and heterozygous individuals (XY) are male. The presence of a Y chromosome causes the development of male characteristics and its absence results in female characteristics. The XY system is also found in some insects and plants.

Avian sex determination is dependent on the presence of Z and W chromosomes. Homozygous for Z (ZZ) results in a male and heterozygous (ZW) results in a female. The W appears to be essential in determining the sex of the individual, similar to the Y chromosome in mammals. Some fish, crustaceans, insects (such as butterflies and moths), and reptiles use this system.

The sex of some species is not determined by genetics but by some aspect of the environment. Sex determination in some crocodiles and turtles, for example, is often dependent on the temperature during critical periods of egg development. This is referred to as environmental sex determination, or more specifically as temperature-dependent sex determination. In many turtles, cooler temperatures during egg incubation produce males and warm temperatures produce females. In some crocodiles, moderate temperatures produce males and both warm and cool temperatures produce females. In some species, sex is both

genetic- and temperature-dependent.

Individuals of some species change their sex during their lives, alternating between male and female. If the individual is female first, it is termed protogyny or “first female,” if it is male first, its termed protandry or “first male.” Oysters, for example, are born male, grow, and become female and lay eggs; some oyster species change sex multiple times.

43.2 Fertilization

By the end of this section, you will be able to do the following:

- Discuss internal and external methods of fertilization
- Describe the methods used by animals for development of offspring during gestation
- Describe the anatomical adaptations that occurred in animals to facilitate reproduction

Sexual reproduction starts with the combination of a sperm and an egg in a process called fertilization. This can occur either inside (**internal fertilization**) or outside (**external fertilization**) the body of the female. Humans provide an example of the former whereas seahorse reproduction is an example of the latter.

External Fertilization

External fertilization usually occurs in aquatic environments where both eggs and sperm are released into the water. After the sperm reaches the egg, fertilization takes place. Most external fertilization happens during the process of spawning where one or several females release their eggs and the male(s) release sperm in the same area, at the same time. The release of the reproductive material may be triggered by water temperature or the length of daylight. Nearly all fish spawn, as do crustaceans (such as crabs and shrimp), mollusks (such as oysters), squid, and echinoderms (such as sea urchins and sea cucumbers). [Figure 43.6](#) shows salmon spawning in a shallow stream. Frogs, like those shown in [Figure 43.7](#), corals, molluscs, and sea cucumbers also spawn.



Figure 43.6 Salmon reproduce through spawning. (credit: Dan Bennett)