

Lecture 4 – Chordates

Chordates are animals that exhibit certain characteristics.

1. Notochord:

- Supporting rod that runs through the length of the body.
- Plays a fundamental role in the development of the overall vertebrate structure of the animal.
- Supports the growth and development of the bone and cartilage structure.

2. Nerve Cord:

- A hollow supporting structure that runs along the dorsal (top side) of the animal.
- Framework for the central nervous system, wherein *neurons* (Cells that transmit electrical messages) are transmitted.

3. Pharyngeal slits:

- Opening slits between the pharynx (near to throat) and the exterior of the chordate.
- For certain chordates, this is used for gas exchange, while others use it to filter food particles from water.

4. Post-Anal Tail:

- Extension of the body that runs through the anal passage.

4.1 Nonvertebrate Chordates