文昌鱼

脊索动物活化石

文昌鱼体长约50毫米，身体侧扁、半透明，两端尖细，外形似鱼，但没有明显的头部、头骨和脊椎。其脊索沿身体背侧纵贯全身，并一直延伸至体前端。文昌鱼保留了脊索、背神经管和咽鳃裂等脊索动物的基本身体结构，是研究脊索动物身体构型及脊椎动物早期演化的重要现生参照。

Branchiostoma

A Living Fossil of the Chordates

Branchiostoma is a small, translucent marine cephalochordate about 50 mm long. Its body is laterally compressed and tapers at both ends, giving it a fish-like appearance. However, it lacks a distinct head, cranium, and vertebral column. Instead, a notochord extends nearly the full length of the body and reaches its anterior tip. It also retains key features of the basic chordate body plan, including a notochord, a dorsal hollow nerve cord, and numerous pharyngeal slits. As a living representative of Cephalochordata, *Branchiostoma* provides an important comparative reference for understanding the chordate body plan and the early evolution of vertebrates.