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On the Notion That Insectivory Is a Specialized Condition

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Insectivory as a specialized feeding condition in mammals has not been explored as has been carnivory or herbivory. Insect-feeding, non-edentate mammals have dilambdodont teeth and modifications in the craniomandibular joint which distinguish them from other mammals such as carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores. Variation in a family of insectivorous bats, Molossidae, can be likened functionally to the kinetic-inertial and static-pressure jaw systems noted in rhipidistians, amphibians, and reptiles. Food data show that the bats with the kinetic-inertial system eat moths and ones with the static-pressure system eat beetles. Not only do these insectivorous mammals eat insects, they also are modified to eat only certain types of insects.