

ON THE EVOLUTION OF SEA ANEMONES FROM CORALS. D.G. Fautin* and J.M. Lowenstein. Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence and Univ. of California, San Francisco.

Corals are generally believed to have evolved from sea anemones. Using radioimmunoassay, we examined the phylogenetic relationships among corals of two families, corallimorpharians of two families, and three sea anemone species from a single family. We infer from our results that corallimorpharians and actinians arose independently from scleractinians. We also infer that the monophyletic corallimorpharians are more closely related to scleractinians than are actinians, but whether Corallimorpharia should be classed as corals remains unresolved.