

# Charles Robert Darwin Encyclopedia Article

## Charles Robert Darwin

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# Charles Robert Darwin

**1809-1882**

English naturalist whose theory that species evolve through natural selection launched a revolution in the biological sciences as well as a storm of scientific and religious controversy. His 1859 book *On the Origin of Species* outlined his theory, and in 1871 *The Descent of Man* applied it to humanity, describing human evolution from ape-like ancestors. Darwin began his scientific career studying plants, animals, fossils, and geology on the famous five-year voyage of the British vessel HMS *Beagle*, which explored the coast of South America and the Galapagos Islands. See long biography on p. 159.