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Nota di contenuto

Front matter -- Contents -- Preface -- 1. The Importance of Comparison -- 2. Basic Phylogenetic Concepts and "Tree Thinking" -- 3. Reconstructing Ancestral States for Discrete Traits -- 4. Reconstructing Ancestral States for Quantitative Traits -- 5. Modeling Evolutionary Change -- 6. Correlated Evolution and Testing Adaptive Hypotheses -- 7. Comparative Methods to Detect Correlated Evolutionary Change -- 8. Using Trees to Study Biological and Cultural Diversification -- 9. Size, Allometry, and Phylogeny -- 10. Human Cultural Traits and Linguistic Evolution -- 11. Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation of Biological and Cultural Diversity -- 12. Investigating Evolutionary Singularities -- 13. Developing a Comparative Database and Targeting Future Data Collection -- 14. Conclusions and Future Directions -- References -- Index

Sommario/riassunto

Comparison is fundamental to evolutionary anthropology. When scientists study chimpanzee cognition, for example, they compare chimp performance on cognitive tasks to the performance of human children on the same tasks. And when new fossils are found, such as those of the tiny humans of Flores, scientists compare these remains to other fossils and contemporary humans. Comparison provides a way to draw general inferences about the evolution of traits and therefore has long been the cornerstone of efforts to understand biological and cultural diversity. Individual studies of fossilized remains, living species, or human populations are the essential units of analysis in a comparative study; bringing these elements into a broader comparative framework allows the puzzle pieces to fall into place, creating a means of testing adaptive hypotheses and generating new ones. With this book, Charles L. Nunn intends to ensure that evolutionary anthropologists and organismal biologists have the tools to realize the potential of comparative research. Nunn provides a wide-ranging investigation of the comparative foundations of evolutionary anthropology in past and present research, including studies of animal behavior, biodiversity, linguistic evolution, allometry, and cross-cultural variation. He also points the way to the future, exploring the new phylogeny-based comparative approaches and offering a how-to manual for scientists who wish to incorporate these new methods into their research.