

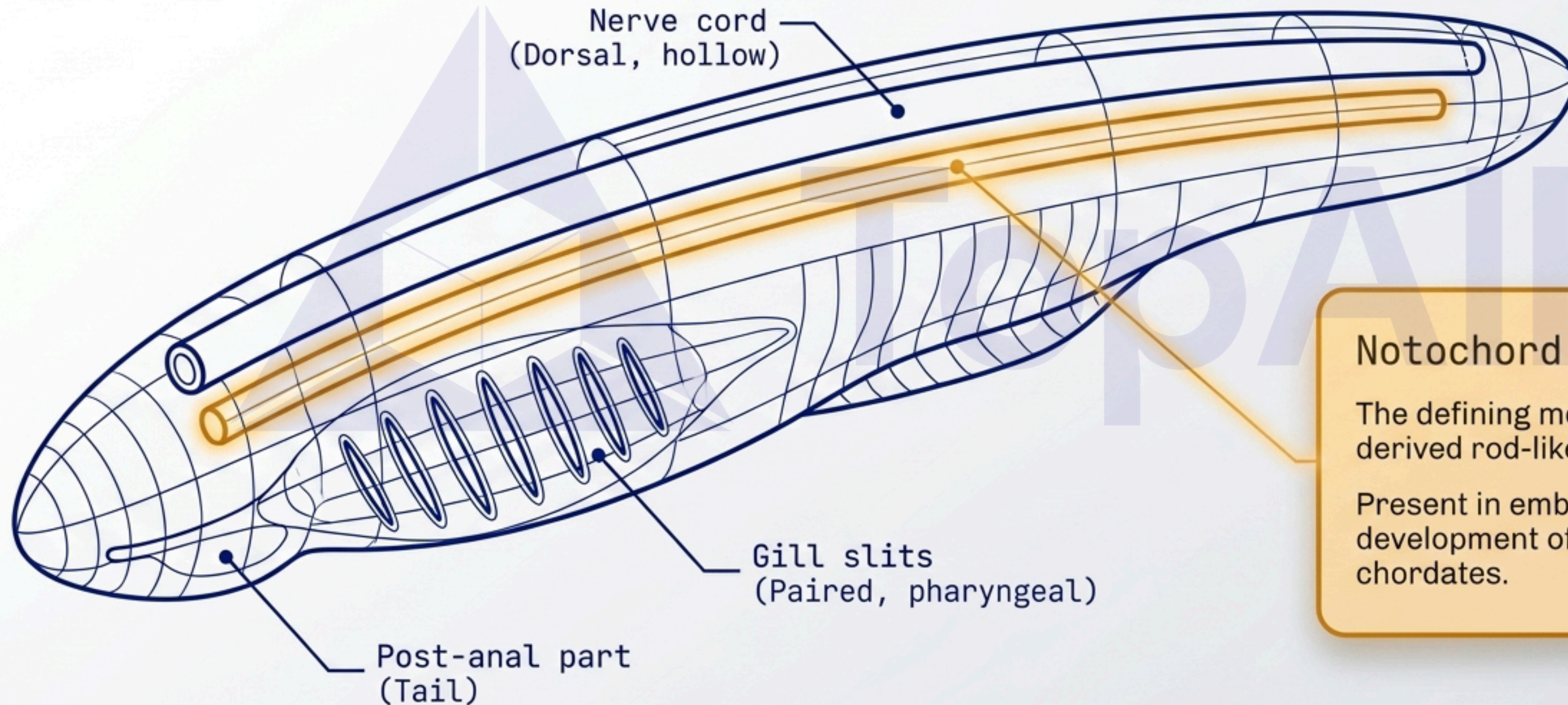
Where the Notochord Goes

Tracking the evolutionary fate of the defining chordate structure.



The Universal Chordate Blueprint

[PHYLUM: CHORDATA]



Notochord

The defining mesodermally derived rod-like structure.

Present in embryonic development of ALL chordates.

The Marine Precursors: Protochordates

Protochordates: The earliest iterations of the chordate blueprint. Exclusively marine habitats.

[SUBPHYLUM: UROCHORDATA]

Also known as: Tunicata

Examples: Ascidia, Salpa, Doliolum

[SUBPHYLUM: CEPHALOCHORDATA]

Examples: Branchiostoma
(Amphioxus / Lancelet)



You've Learned the Theory. Let's Test Them Now.

$$E=mc^2$$



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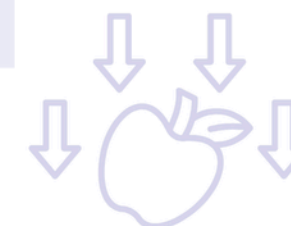
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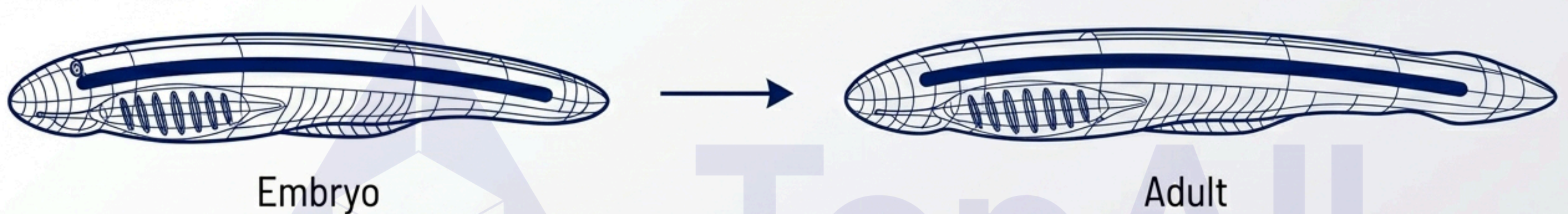
Key Highlights

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Cephalochordata: The Persistent Blueprint

[SUBPHYLUM: CEPHALOCHORDATA]



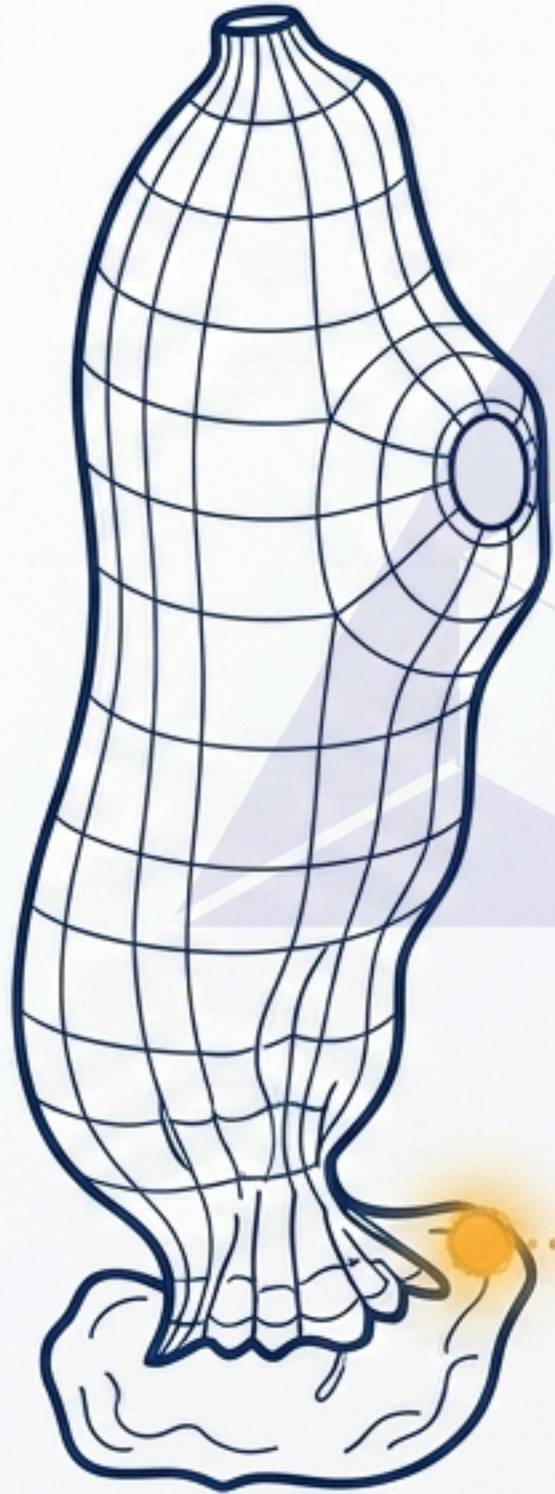
Fate of the Notochord: Extends from head to tail region and is persistent throughout their entire life.



Key Example: *Branchiostoma*
(*Amphioxus*)

Urochordata: The Disappearing Blueprint

[SUBPHYLUM: UROCHORDATA]



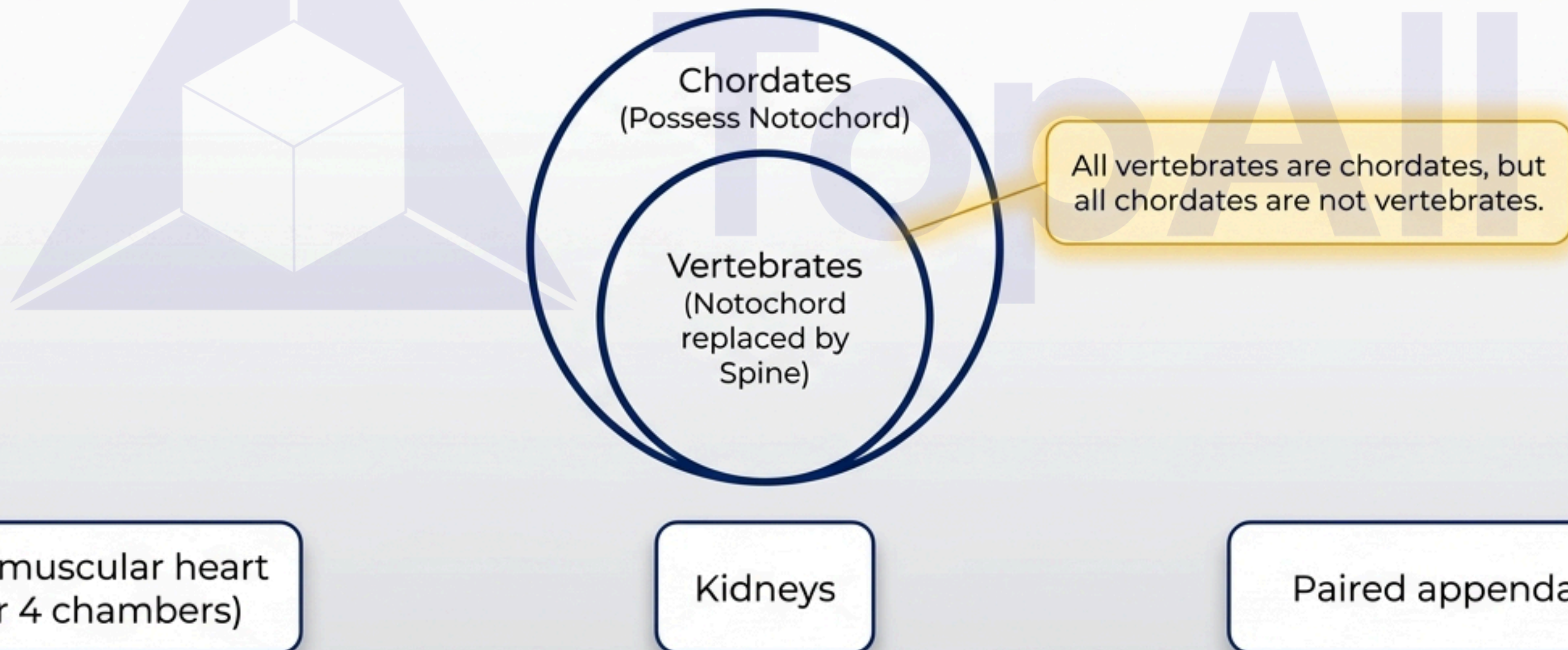
Biological Clarification:

The adult Ascidia is sessile. The notochord existed in its free-swimming larval stage right here, before being reabsorbed.

Fate of the Notochord: Present ONLY in the larval tail, and completely lost in adulthood.

Vertebrata: The Upgraded Blueprint

Fate of the Notochord: Present during the embryonic period, but completely replaced by a cartilaginous or bony vertebral column in the adult.



Diagnostic Matrix: The Fate of the Notochord

	Urochordata	Cephalochordata	Vertebrata
Notochord Fate	Embryonic larval tail only → Lost	Head to tail → Persistent for life	Embryonic period → Replaced by spine
Habitat	Exclusively Marine	Exclusively Marine	Various Habitats
Key Examples	Ascidia, Salpa	Branchiostoma	Fishes, Amphibians, Mammals



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