

**Individuality, self-interest and agency in evolutionary biology**  
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This paper starts with a bird's eye view of the 'problem of biological individuality', as it features in the philosophy of biology literature. A number of quite senses of 'biological individual', and a number of different explanatory projects, are distinguished. It is argued that the idea of a 'unified account of individuality' in the different special sciences is not ultimately cogent; it is also argued that the recent tendency in philosophy of biology to speak of 'individuation' suggests a false kinship with the way that expression is used in analytic metaphysics, which has led to confusion. Finally, one particular issue is identified as interesting and worthy of further study, namely which biological units can sensibly be thought of as having 'interests', and so being akin to rational agents trying to maximize a utility function. The significance of this question for evolutionary biology is stressed.