

Slit the soft palate longitudinally and observe the nasopharynx. The *Eustachian tubes* pass from the latero-dorsal wall of the nasopharynx to the middle ear. At the anterior end you will find the openings of the *internal nares*. They are continuous with the *external nares*, or nostrils.

Near the entrance to the nasopharynx find the *isthmus of fauces*, the opening from the oral cavity into the oropharynx.

**Epiglottis** — This cone-shaped flap of cartilage is located at the top of the *larynx* (voice box) near the base of the tongue. It protects the *glottis*, the slit-like opening to the trachea. During swallowing and eating the epiglottis prevents food from entering the trachea.

**Trachea** — This tube is commonly called the windpipe. It is topped by the epiglottis and larynx. It is kept open by rings of cartilage which extend around the trachea at intervals. They are incomplete dorsally. The trachea branches to form two *bronchi* which enter the lungs.

**Esophagus** — This muscular tube, located dorsal to the trachea is also known as the gullet. Unlike the trachea, however, it is collapsed. Food is pushed forward in the esophagus by the rhythmic contractions of its walls, a process known as *peristalsis*.

The esophagus extends posteriorly and dorsally within the thorax, then passes through the diaphragm into the abdominal cavity where it ends at the stomach.

In order to find the trachea and esophagus use two wooden probes. With one, penetrate the glottis and pass into the trachea. Move the probe up and down and observe the movement of the trachea. With the second probe enter the esophagus dorsal to the glottis. Move it up and down and observe the corresponding movement of the esophagus (see photo p. 55).