



EVIDENCE FROM FOSSILS



Number 2 in the Evidence series, from Creation Research

**WHAT IS THE FOSSIL RECORD?
DO FOSSILS SHOW EVOLUTION?**

**COULD FOSSILS SUPPORT CREATION?
WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE?**

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FOSSILS AND EVOLUTION

A 1998 Australian biology text published by Oxford University Press makes the following claims about the significance of fossils to the theory of evolution. "*Fossils are an important source of evidence for evolution... The fossil record supports a theory of progressive increase in the complexity of organisms and denies the fixity of species.*"¹ Evolution is the theory that claims living organisms have changed through time from ancestral single cells into the different life forms in the world today, including human beings. Any record of this process preserved as fossils, should show only very simple organisms in the oldest rocks. Progressively younger rocks should show fossils becoming more varied and complex.

WHAT IS THE FOSSIL RECORD?

The fossil record consists of the preserved remains of creatures buried in sedimentary rock layers throughout the world. Fossils may be animals or plants but can also be impressions, such as footprints in sediment that turned into rock. Durable parts of creatures such as bones, shells, teeth or woody stems are the most common fossils. Surprisingly, there are also many examples of soft tissues so well preserved that individual cells and other microscopic structures can be seen.

DO FOSSILS SHOW EVOLUTION?

The ideal fossil evidence for a theory that living things have changed since they first appeared on earth would be a progression of preserved remains that mostly differ from today's creatures, yet are linked by intermediate fossil forms from the beginnings of life to present day multicellular organisms and man. Such an intact family tree of fossils would be found only if sufficient creatures had:

- a) been buried,
- b) then fossilised,
- c) and the fossils preserved.

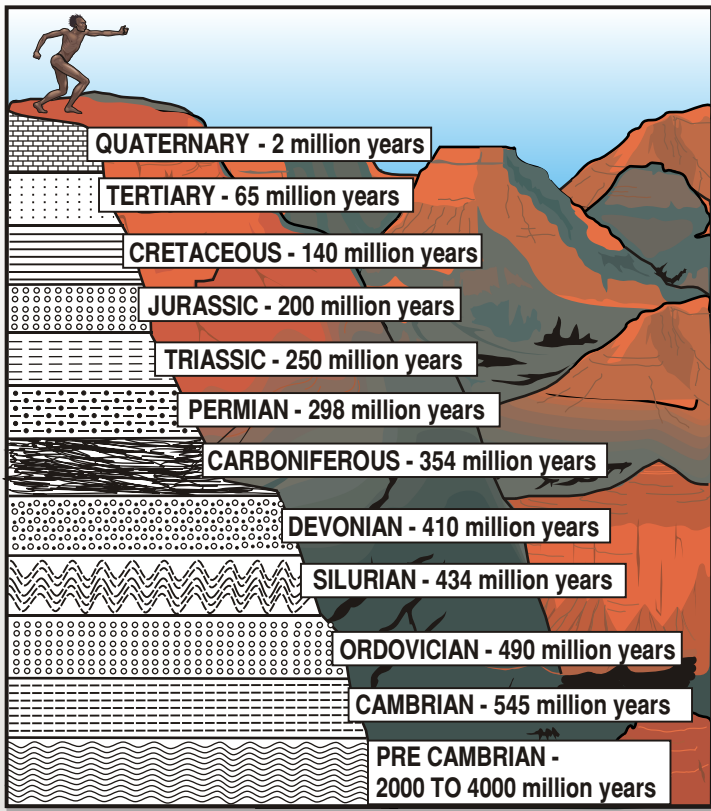
GAPS in the fossil record would result from processes such as erosion, or failure to fossilise.

BEST EVIDENCE

The best fossil record for the theory of evolution, would occur only if the complete record of all rock layers formed through their believed billions of years of earth's history was preserved in order, as shown in the "Ideal Geologic Column". (over) The names of rock layers in this column originally came from descriptions or locations the rocks were first studied e.g. Devonian from Devon UK, Carboniferous, has carbon. The names at first had no connection to evolution or millions of years.

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THE IDEAL GEOLOGIC COLUMN



COULD FOSSILS SUPPORT CREATION?

To answer this question we must first ask what type of fossil record would result from living things having been created "to produce their own kind", as the Biblical book of Genesis says?² The following list will give you a place to start thinking. Such a fossil record would show one or more of six trends:

- 1) Since major life forms were separately created, they had no evolutionary ancestors so any fossil record will result in organisms appearing suddenly and fully formed.
- 2) Creatures have remained basically the same kind down to the present day; or
- 3) They may have degenerated, i.e. diminished in size or complexity; or
- 4) They may have become extinct, i.e. died out and
- 5) **GAPS** in the fossil record would result primarily from the existence of genetic differences between created kinds. Such gaps would not be random, but would show an underlying pattern of order. Regardless of how creatures became fossils, such gaps would be real and not merely the result of statistical analysis due to the current classification schemes.

WHAT IS THE FOSSIL EVIDENCE?

Fossils have traditionally been classified using the same criteria of structural similarities and differences which are also used to separate living creatures. The significant

difference being we can rarely study the "life" features of fossils, i.e. reproduction, digestion, behaviour, etc. Examples of recent (at date of publication) fossil research follow, presented in "newsbit" format, plus source references. Fossil items are arranged in normal evolutionary sequences from oldest to youngest according to believed geologic ages. Each "newsbit" is followed by editorial comments (*ED. COM.*), to help you consider whether the evidence supports evolution or creation.

OLDEST FOSSIL AUSSIE found as evolutionist Birger Rasmussen (University of Western Australia) claims discovery of sulphur deposits containing fossil micro organisms (*Nature* Vol 405, p676, 8 June 2000). The fossils consist of microscopic filament layers within the rocks, similar in size and structure to living filament forming bacteria. The filaments were embedded deep in rocks near Sulphur Springs in northwest Western Australia. The rocks are believed to have originally formed around geothermal vents (underwater volcanic sources) and are claimed to be 3,235 million years old, i.e. 2,700 million years older than previously claimed "oldest" bacteria.

*ED. COM. Today's underwater volcanic vents host many bacteria which extract chemical energy needed to sustain life from sulphurous inorganic matter. They live in harsh environments only by carrying out complex chemical processes that modern industrial chemists envy. If the Western Australian fossils have been correctly identified, this discovery does verify that from the time Sulphur Spring rocks formed up to the present, filament forming bacteria have not evolved into anything else, and that complex, fully functioning bacteria have been on earth from the beginning, and have reproduced their own kind ever since. The Biblical record in Genesis says this is how life was created to function.*³

CAMBRIAN EXPLOSION PUZZLE, according to *Science*, 20 July, 2001, p438. The discovery of a fully formed Ostracod (a crustacean), in early Cambrian rocks has led evolutionist Richard Fortey to question whether there was a rapid evolution from an undifferentiated multi-cellular creature into the many different animal phyla at the beginning of the Cambrian period. The problem for the evolutionist is that there are too many fully formed distinct types of animals at the beginning of the Cambrian with no obvious predecessors in Pre-Cambrian rocks. Some palaeontologists have suggested the "phylogenetic fuse" theory, i.e. a long period of hidden

evolutionary development that occurred in the Pre-Cambrian and produced all the different phyla of animals, but left no evidence.

*ED. COM. If there are no fossils showing a long period of pre-Cambrian evolution, then this is a huge **GAP** in the fossil record for evolution. Cambrian fossils include creatures as diverse and specialised as Trilobites (now extinct), Ostracods and Velvet worms (still here). They all appeared fully formed. Exactly what you would predict on the basis of the Genesis account of special creation followed by rapid burial sometime after creation. Evolutionists who scoff at creationists and accuse them of believing things that cannot be seen should look at themselves.*

SPIKES REVEAL OLD SPONGES, as reported in *New Scientist* 12 April 1997, p19. Sponges are considered to be amongst the simplest multicellular animals but until recently they had not been found in the oldest fossil bearing rocks. Palaeontologists from Oxford University UK looked for silica spicules (microscopic spikes that form a stiff supportive framework for sponges) and found them in Mongolian lower Cambrian rocks believed to be 544 million years old. The spicules have the same shape and composition as those in today's sponges. Discoverer, Martin Brasier, says this is the only clear evidence that sponges existed so early.

ED. COM. The fact that palaeontologists were able to find and identify fossil sponges by looking for features found in present day living ones, proves sponges have produced their own kind since these fossils were formed. It also reveals whether evolution or creation, is more useful for identifying fossils. The Oxford evolutionary scientists found what they wanted by inconsistently acting like creationists searching for the "same kind" of features as exist today.

SUDDENLY FOSSILS

Dr TS Kemp - Curator of Zoological Collections, Oxford University said in 1999 "... as has been known and puzzled about for well over a century, virtually all the animal phyla and most of the contained classes first appear as fossils in the Cambrian in an extraordinarily small window of time."⁴

*ED. COM. Ostracods and bacteria, sponges and the jellyfish (found in Australia's famous Ediacara Cambrian/Pre-Cambrian boundary deposits), are only four examples from a vast number of fossil creatures easy to recognise, because they are still here. This sudden appearance at the base of all family trees also produces the biggest fossil **GAP** of all for evolution.*

BURIED FOSSIL BELIEFS

Unknown to most people, the standard interpretation of the fossil record is based on the following sequence of hidden assumptions:

- (a) Most fossils are the remains of creatures,
- (b) which were buried where they lived and died,
- (c) therefore most rock layers represent preserved environments,
- (d) which are found in recognizable order,
- (e) so the fossil record shows the history of life,
- (f) and this sequence reveals a progression from simple to complex life forms,
- (g) which is the evidence for evolution.

This record of layers containing fossils, presented one on top of the other, has become known as the Geologic Column. Therefore any strata which are missing because they have been eroded or were not deposited in the first place, have produced a **GEOLOGICAL GAP** in the evidence.

In addition, fossils which would be evolutionary links between different creatures but have not been found, produce a **BIOLOGICAL GAP** (missing link) in the fossil record of evolution. These two **GAP** types are not the same. The importance of this will be shown later.



FISHY FAMILY TREE according to *Nature* Vol 397, p564, 18 February 1999 which asks where did bony fishes come from and includes the statement: "However, as you trace these groups backwards in time through the fossil record the lobe fin fishes become more diverse until in the Devonian period, 408-363 million years ago, you find a wide range of lobe fins alongside just a few ray fins. But then the record stops abruptly."

*ED. COM. Lobe fin fishes today include only African, Australian and South American lungfishes plus the Coelacanth. Their known fossil record starts with many types and ends with few - the opposite of evolution. The abrupt start of the "fishy family" tree is the evidence of another large **GAP** in evolutionary records.*

LUNGFISH TEETH NEVER CHANGE, according to *Nature* Vol 411, p548, 31 May, 2001. Lungfish grow new teeth continually, but old ones are never shed. Adult lungfish therefore have many rows of teeth on the roof of their mouth and lower jaw - an arrangement unique to lungfish. Robert Reiz (University of Toronto) and Moya Smith (Dental Institute, Kings College London) who studied living and fossil lungfish teeth, were surprised to find they are the same even though Reiz and Smith believe they are "separated by 360 million years of evolution."

ED. COM. Teeth are not the only distinctive identical features in fossil and living lungfish. For this reason lungfish are also described as living fossils, i.e. they have undergone no evolution from the time lungfish first fossilised up to the present, no matter how many years separate fossil and living specimens.

FIRST AUSSIE WALKER FOUND claims Australian researcher who discovered the oldest land crawling millipede in the Southern Hemisphere. Dr Greg Edgecombe (Senior Researcher, Australian Museum) has found his "fossil first" at a site near Yass, north of Australia's national capital, Canberra. The 400 million year old millipede was about 14 cm long and 5 cm wide covered with a hard case along its back.⁵

ED. COM. Millipedes are still here, and join the ever increasing number of creatures known as living fossils - creatures that have not changed from their first appearance on earth to the present.



COCKROACHES, HORSESHOE CRABS, CROCODILES AND GINKO TREES cause evolutionists to shake their heads (*New Scientist*, 23rd October 1999, pp36-39). According to evolutionist dating, cockroaches have been around for 250 million years, horseshoe crabs for 200 million years, crocodiles 140 million and ginko trees 125 million years. They are creatures that have not changed since they first appeared in the fossil record.

ED.COM. To the previous list, we can add Coelacanth, Tuatara lizards, Nautilus and Lingula shells, Bryzoans, the fish-like Amphioxus, Tassel Ferns and a host of other animals and plants. The only change observed in many of these creatures is they have become smaller. Living fossils remind us that long time spans do not help the theory of evolution. The older you believe the rock to be, the less helpful living fossils are to the theory of evolution, as you are really claiming that such creatures have produced their own kind for vast eons.

OLD SALAMANDERS LIKE NEW, concludes science writer Robert Carroll (*Nature*, Vol 410, p534, 29 March 2001), writing about the discovery of more than 500 salamander fossils in a Chinese Jurassic volcanic deposit Carroll writes, "The fossils are immediately recognisable as salamanders from their body and limb proportions, as well as from details of their skull anatomy." Salamanders have a unique limb bone structure not found in other amphibians. Ke-Quin Gao and Neil Shubin who studied the fossils and reported them to *Nature* (same issue, p574) claim the salamander body plan "has remained fundamentally stable for over 150 million years."

ED. COM. The Chinese fossils were immediately recognisable because salamanders are "fundamentally stable" i.e. they have not changed. They are still here. The Bible's first book, Genesis, uses another term for "fundamentally stable" - it is "after their kind". Found ten times in Genesis 1, this statement applies to all living things God made.

NAKED FOSSIL SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON AMMONITES as UK "geologists have been given a rare glimpse of what lived inside the shells of ammonites over 65 million years ago" (*New Scientist*, 4 September 1999, page 25). Ammonites are like modern Nautilus shells. Neville Hollingworth (Natural Environment Research Council, Swindon) has found the ammonite fossil *Sigaloceras calloviense* at Fairford, Gloucestershire. Its outer shell has dissolved away to reveal the outline of muscles and tentacles preserved inside. Hollingworth states these structures are very similar to those in present Nautilus, the ammonite's closest living relative.

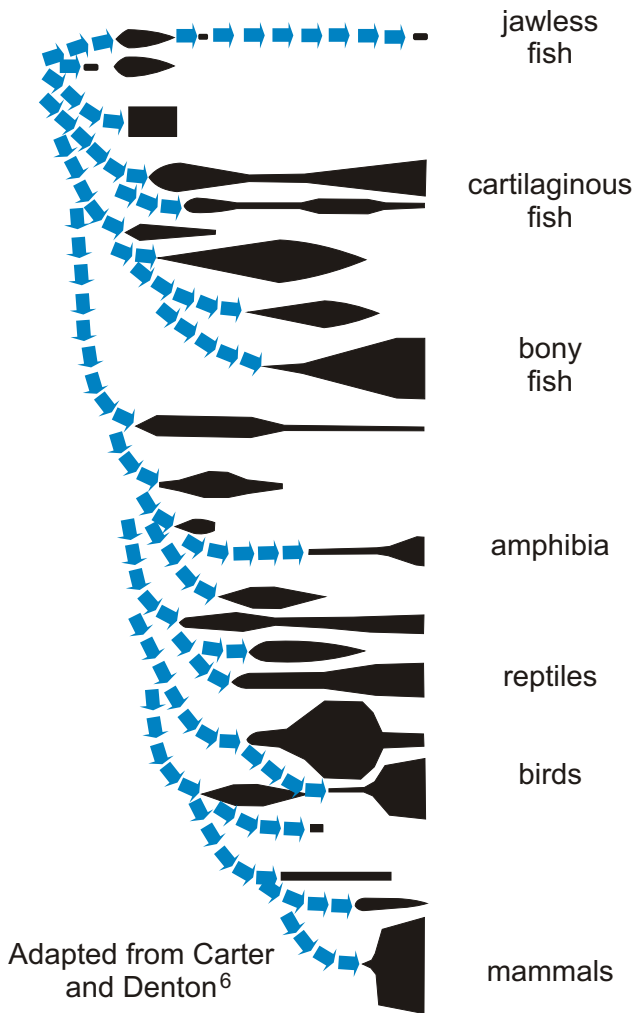
ED. COM. This not only indicates rapid burial and preservation, it adds to the evidence that creatures have done three things at most, since the beginning, i.e. they have either become extinct, (Dinosaurs and Dodo); they have become less impressive through loss of size or features (Crocodiles and Platypus); or they have stayed the same. None of which helps the theory of evolution.

IS THIS PATTERN UNIVERSAL?

FOSSIL RECORD (below) of bony creatures (vertebrates) shows abundance of fossils in rock layers from Cambrian (left) to present day (right). Arrowed lines show believed evolutionary links where no fossils have been found. Groups not reaching the right hand side are believed to be extinct.

GEOLOGIC TIME

Cambrian.....Present



MAN AND CHIMPS TOO

NOTABLE QUOTABLE ON HUMAN EVOLUTION, as regular *Nature* writer Henry Gee said (July 2001). "Fossil evidence of human evolutionary history is fragmentary and open to various interpretations. Fossil evidence of chimpanzee evolution is absent altogether."⁷

ED. COM. No fossil evidence of the chimps' family tree surely means we have no fossil evidence chimps evolved? "Various interpretations" of fragmentary data is not evidence of Human evolution either.

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THIS PATTERN?

Curator of Zoological Collections, Oxford University Dr TS Kemp said (1999) "With few exceptions, radically new kinds of organisms appear for the first time in the fossil record already fully evolved, with most of their characteristic features present."⁸

ED. COM. The fossil record consists of creatures so "fully evolved", they can be classified into different kinds, separated by distinct gaps. This pattern is universal, a fact that has been known for a long time.

BIO - GAPS

FAMOUS PALEONTOLOGIST G.G.Simpson, referring to missing fossils in the evolutionary sequence, stated at the 1959 Darwin Centenary Symposium "Gaps among known species are sporadic and often small. Gaps among known (*classification groups*) orders, classes and phyla are systematic and almost always large."⁹

GEO - GAPS

In 1993 U.K. Geology Professor Derek Ager said in reference to missing rock layers, "it may seem paradoxical, but to me the gaps probably cover most of earth's history... It was during the breaks that most events probably occurred... this was when most animals and plants lived out their short lives or evolved into new forms."¹⁰

*ED.COM. The importance of Ager's comment is missed by most. Any **GEOLOGICAL GAPS**, or missing layers in the orthodox geologic column were caused by either erosion or non deposition, both of which are **RANDOM** events. Ager (and most others) assume it is in those absent strata that the missing fossil evidence for evolution would have been deposited, if the record had been preserved. But the problem for evolution is that the missing fossils produce **BIOLOGICAL GAPS** between major life groups that are **SYSTEMATIC**. Can you see the dilemma? **RANDOM GAPS** in strata produced by processes such as erosion and non deposition, could never in a million million years produce **SYSTEMATIC GAPS** in fossil evidence.*

THINKERS PROBLEM!

The fact that all creatures appear suddenly in the fossil record separated from possible ancestors, by large *systematic* **BIO-GAPS** (missing fossils), in spite of the many *random* **GEO-GAPS** (missing rocks), is the major unspoken problem for all theories of evolution from Darwin to Gould. Attempts to solve this dilemma have concentrated on fossil **GAPS** (as seen over).

SO HOW DO PRESENT BIOLOGY TEXTBOOKS EXPLAIN FOSSIL GAPS?

1998 Oxford University Press publication *Biology, an Australian Perspective*, states:¹¹

"There are, however, many gaps in the fossil record. This is because:

- dead organisms decompose rapidly
- dead organisms are eaten by scavengers
- soft-bodied organisms do not fossilise easily
- only a small fraction of organisms die in conditions favourable to fossilisation
- only a fraction of the fossils have been unearthed."

THIS EXPLANATION IS NOT NEW. Charles Darwin used it 1859 when he said: "Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely-graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and serious objection which can be urged against the theory. The explanation lies, as I believe, in the extreme imperfection of the geological record."¹²

ED.COM. The hidden assumption in both extracts above is that the fossil GAPS were caused by RANDOM processes i.e. failure to fossilise, erosion of rocks or failure to find.

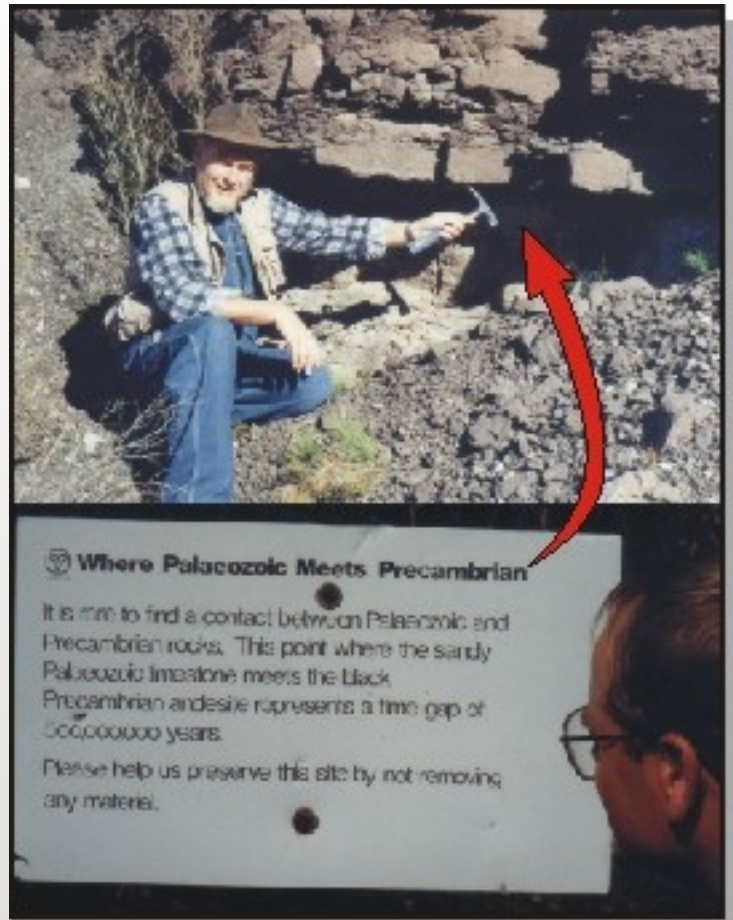
IS THE "IMPERFECT GEOLOGICAL RECORD" ARGUMENT VALID?

Geology Professor, J. B. Waterhouse (University of Queensland) stated: "But how good is the geological record? I have already mentioned the ordinary viewpoint of evolution held by most palaeontologists favours gradual incremental change. The fossil record, they say, is too incomplete to take seriously. And, they say, you cannot prove a gap, especially if clines occurred. If there is a break in the record it must be possible to detect the break. The main point about breaks is that if they were really random, as proposed by Darwin, they must have been plugged by one hundred and fifty years of work. But the gaps have not been plugged. They still persist; yet authorities forget that if there is a million to one chance of one specimen of a population being preserved, and then if that species live 5-15 million years, we therefore will get 5-15 times the population fossilised. The trouble may perhaps have lain more truthfully in our failure to find or describe the material. It is special pleading to rely on the gaps, and its special pleading to propose inadequate preservation. We would do better to look at what the record really says."¹³

THE REAL GEOLOGIC COLUMN

Comparing the actual rock record, to the IDEAL COLUMN reveals most of it is not there, as seen in the

following officially posted example in Ontario Canada.



CAN WE AVOID THE GAP PROBLEM BY FINDING FOSSIL LINKS OR INTERMEDIATES?

Professor Niles Eldredge said on p55 of his 1991 Princeton University Press publication, *Fossils: The Evolution and Extinction of Species*, "There are intermediates to be found in the fossil record - if you are a very lucky palaeontologist. But they come packaged in a way not originally imagined by Darwin: rather than finding intermediate specimens temporally sandwiched between older and younger samples, it is far more common to find no intermediates between older, ancestral and younger descendent species. Rather it is more common to find the 'descendent' already living while the ancestor lived - but in some other region."

ED.COM. When you find fossil descendents and ancestors buried in the same rock, isn't it time to admit this is not evidence one evolved into the other?

MOST FAMOUS LINK

The most popular non-missing link in the evolutionist record is the bird-like Archaeopteryx found in Upper Jurassic sediments (Germany). But the problem Eldredge refers to (above), is well illustrated by Jensen's discovery in 1977 of true birds in the Lower Jurassic Morrison formation (USA). Using evolutionist dating, that means true birds existed

60 million years before their reptile linking ancestor Archaeopteryx. (*Science News* September 24, 1977) The additional discovery of 2 crow-sized bird fossils in the Triassic Dockum formation in Texas would make true birds 75 million years older than Archaeopteryx. There are currently no known evolutionary ancestors for birds in the fossil record, making yet another **SYSTEMATIC GAP**. (see also "The oldest fossil bird - a rival for Archaeopteryx" *Science* 199-284 (1978) and *Nature* 322 (1986), p.677) The same thing has happened to other famous links such as the claimed sequence of 3 toed to 1 toed horses.



WHAT DOES THIS DO TO FOSSIL EVIDENCE FOR EVOLUTION?

Professor Niles Eldredge also said: "No wonder palaeontologists shied away from evolution for so long. It never seems to happen. Assiduous collecting up cliff faces yields zigzags, minor oscillations, and the very occasional slight accumulation of change - over millions of years, at a rate too slow to account for all the prodigious change that has occurred in evolutionary history."¹⁴

*ED.COM. Eldredge has become famous for his idea that the fossil record demands a new, 'non-Darwinian', 'punctuated equilibrium' theory of evolution. He and colleague Stephen Gould developed the theory to cover the problem fossil gaps made for Neo-Darwinian evolutionary theory. It's time they took one more step and admitted the **SYSTEMATIC GAPS** in the fossil evidence do not support any evolution theory.*

CONCLUSION:

Darwin admitted the fossil record did not show evolution. He did not live long enough to observe evolution, nor did he live to see the science of genetics. Therefore, his theory and all its present variations (eg. Gould and Eldredge) have never been based on proof that life had evolved (fossils), that life could change (mechanisms), or that life does evolve (observed process).

The evolutionist who assumes that **SYSTEMATIC BIO-GAPS** (missing fossils) are caused by **RANDOM GEO-GAPS** (missing rocks) or failure to find enough evidence, makes a fatal flaw. **SYSTEMATIC GAPS** in fossil evidence and a sudden appearance in the fossil record, are a predictable result of life having been created!

You and I live in a world where living creatures from bacteria to humans do actually reproduce their own kind. Fossil remains show that's what such creatures have always done, regardless of how long ago you think they were fossilised. This fact does not help any theory of evolution, but it is positive evidence for the special creation of creatures designed to produce only their own kind.

The fact that many fossil creatures have living descendents so similar to their first known form in the rock record, combined with the evidence that many fossil creatures have died out and have left no descendents, actually does fit the Biblical picture of God creating organisms which can only produce their own kind (i.e. not evolve), followed by degeneration resulting from environmental collapse after Noah's Flood, combined with the effects of Adam's sin.

Now you are free to ask questions such as:

- a) Is there any other evidence living things don't evolve, but
- b) can reproduce only their own kind? and
- c) does human fossil evidence support creation?

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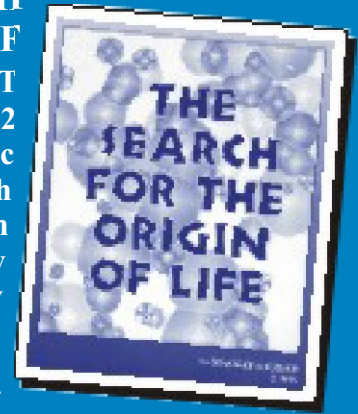
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