Written by Administrator Wednesday, 06 February 2013 03:58 -

How poison frogs get their poison reported in ScienceNOW and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* , 8

August 2005, and the New York Times, 9 August 2005. Poisonous frogs contain toxic chemicals called alkaloids in their skin, but most do not actually manufacture the chemicals themselves. Recently scientists found that poisonous frogs in Panama acquired their alkaloids by eating ants and millipedes that contained these chemicals. To find out if other poisonous frogs obtained their chemical arsenal from their diet, a group of researchers led by Valerie Clark of Columbia University, New York analysed the poisonous chemicals in Madagascan frogs and the ants and millipedes that the frogs ate. They found matching poisonous alkaloids in frogs and their prey and also found that "although the Malagasy frogs and their arthropod prey are not closely related to those in Central and South America . the frogs shared 75 percent of the alkaloids."

The researchers concluded: "Our results suggest convergent evolution for the acquisition of defensive alkaloids in these dietary ants, which may have been the critical prerequisite for subsequent convergence in poison frogs between Madagascar and the Neotropics."

New York Times

Editorial Comment: "Convergent evolution" simply means that two creatures have similar characteristics that cannot be traced back to a common ancestor. However, the fact that frogs in different parts of the world acquire poisons in the same way provides no evidence for evolution in either frogs or ants.

In reality, these findings answer an important question often used by Bible sceptics who claim the description of the original created world, where all animals only ate plants (in Genesis 1) cannot be true. If that were so, why would God give some animals, such as poisonous frogs, such lethal chemical defences to stop predators from eating them? This research described above helps answer this challenge. If frogs did not eat ants or millipedes in the beginning, they would not accumulate poisons in their skin. This is confirmed by zoos and aquariums that raise frogs and feed them on food that does not contain alkaloids. These captive bred frogs are not poisonous. The explanation of these findings in evolutionary jargon is typical of a common trend where all discoveries in biology are presented in evolutionary terms, whether it is relevant or not. (Ref. diets, ecology, poisons)