Fossil Snake Hips

Written by Administrator Wednesday, 23 January 2013 08:51 -

Fossil snake hips found, as reported in *Nature*, vol. 440, p1037 and *New Scientist* 19 April 2006. Palaeontologists from the Argentine Museum of Natural History have found a 1.5 metre (5 feet) long fossil snake with small legs that are attached to its backbone, in Cretaceous rocks of the Candeleros Formation in Argentina. Some living snakes, such as pythons, have small spurs projecting from the pelvic region but these are anchored to their ribs. The new fossil has two sacral vertebrae, forming a clear demarcation between trunk vertebrae and tail vertebrae. The sacral vertebrae form an anchor point for some tiny pelvic and lower limb bones. The limb bones consist of a femur (thigh bone), fibula (small shin bone) and the top of a tibia (main shin bone) and are very small, certainly not large or strong enough to be used for walking.

The rock formation where the fossils were found is classified as a terrestrial (dry land) formation, and this has revived a debate between evolutionists over what type of creatures gave rise to snakes. In the early twentieth century palaeontologists claimed that snakes evolved from land dwelling burrowing lizards. However, recent fossil snakes with limbs were found in rocks classified as marine deposits, so some snake experts claimed that snakes evolved from marine creatures and then slithered onto land. The scientists who found the new fossil claim it proves the land evolution theory. The new fossil snake has been named "Najash rionegrina" which the Nature authors state comes "from Hebrew 'Najash' the legged biblical snake; and 'rionegrina' for Río Negro Province, Argentina, where the fossil was found."

Editorial Comment: The name of this fossil is interesting. The authors certainly show they have some concept that the serpent mentioned in Genesis 3 had legs, and God's curse on the serpent to crawl on its belly in the dust implies it lost its legs. According to Strong's Concordance, the word translated "serpent" in the King James Bible is "Nachash", which is derived from a similar Hebrew word that means to hiss or whisper, related to the hissing sound made by a snake.

As the limb bones in this new fossil are incomplete, it is impossible to really tell how functional they were. Living snakes, such as the python, which have very small limbs do use them to hold each other for mating, and as such they still are functional features for the snake, although too small to use for walking.

If the legs of this fossil snake are evidence of limbs in the process of being lost, this is no help to the theory of evolution. Limb loss or shrinkage is a degenerative change, i.e. a change from complex to simple and the opposite of evolution. Finally, we would like to remind those evolutionists involved in debating a terrestrial or marine origin of snakes, that the rocks in which

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a fossil is found tell you only where the fossil creature got buried, not where it lived. (Ref. reptiles, degeneration, bones)

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