

February 2016

## Fossils

By Joe Spears, MS

How many of us have heard that evolution is supported by the evidence of the fossil record or that millions of fossils prove evolution had to have occurred? It has been assumed that as more research accumulated and more fossils were discovered, there would be increasing evidence to support the thesis of Darwin that evolution of species has occurred. In fact, it now seems to be popular to think that this has indeed occurred, and that new fossil evidence - including evidence of whale evolution, etc. - now has lent increased support to the theory of evolution. We will look at the results of the research in the years following Darwin. We will also examine claims or statements from scientists, including evolutionists, about this fossil evidence. Let's look at this and see what the actual fossil evidence tells us!

### Evidence

First, let's look at some evidence supposedly supporting evolution.

### Whales

#### Rodhocetus

Rodhocetus supposedly had "feet that were probably webbed."<sup>1</sup> However, the scientist who found the fossil now does not think it had flippers.

Since then we have found the forelimbs, the hands, and the front arms of Rodhocetus, and we understand that it doesn't have the kind of arms that can spread out like flippers on a whale.<sup>2</sup> Also this animal supposedly had a fluked tail, but the discoverer now doubts that it had a fluked tail.

#### Ambulocetus

This animal has been described as a walking whale. Exhibits about it have been displayed in museums including ones in Canada, New York, and Melbourne. It has been displayed with a partially evolved blowhole on its snout. However, the blowhole was not actually found

in any fossil. The fossils on this creature do not include the tip of the snout, and therefore it is not known where the nasal opening was located. And of course, it is not known if the blowhole was partial, complete, or even existed at all as a "blowhole".<sup>3</sup>

Much more has been written about whale evolution; this is to point out that the evidence is not so complete as some may have thought.

### Horse

Wikipedia states about horse evolution that "Paleozoologists have been able to piece together a more complete outline of the evolutionary lineage of the modern horse than of any other animal."<sup>4</sup> However, let's look at the statement of an evolutionist:

...some of the classic cases of Darwinian change in the fossil record, such as the evolution of the horse in North America, have had to be discarded or modified as a result of more detailed information."<sup>5</sup>

There is one interesting aspect to this: the "most complete" evolutionary outline is based on evidence that does not support evolution! This obviously raises the question: what about the less complete evolutionary outlines for all the other animals? Would they be even less supported by the evidence? If so, then it would obviously seem that the fossil evidence does not support their evolution at all.

### Polystrate Fossils

A polystrate fossil is simply a fossil that spans more than one sedimentary layer of rock (Figure 1). This means that, according to the conventional timetable for the geologic column (the time periods assigned to various layers of rock), a single fossil extends through layers that indicate many years of time. The problem with these fossils is that fossilization happens quickly. The creature

<sup>1</sup> Rodhocetus. 2016 Jan 14. <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodhocetus>> Accessed 2016 Feb 01.

<sup>2</sup> Batten D. Rodhocetus and other stories of whale evolution. <<http://creation.com/rodhocetus>> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

<sup>3</sup> Don Batten, Rodhocetus and other stories of whale evolution. 2014 May 19 <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkwhd\\_gIR7c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkwhd_gIR7c)> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

<sup>4</sup> Evolution of the horse. 2016 Jan 27 <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolution\\_of\\_the\\_horse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolution_of_the_horse)> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

<sup>5</sup> Raup R. 1979. Conflicts between Darwin and paleontology. *Field Museum of Natural History Bulletin* 50(1):22-9

being fossilized does not last long enough to have multiple layers of sediment build around it if these layers requires long periods of time to build up.<sup>6,7,8</sup>

### The General Nature of Fossils

Fossils are found in largely sedimentary rock. This is rock laid down by or from water. It has been shown that layers of rock can be laid down in a short time by the formation of hundreds of feet of such layers shortly following the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, as pointed out by geologist

Steve Austin: "Up to 400 feet thickness of strata have formed since 1980 at Mount St. Helens."<sup>9</sup>



Figure 1

Note, the rock is sedimentary, which is what one may expect from a flood. The fossils are mostly marine in nature, also suggestive that the fossils may have been laid down by a flood. Geologist John Morris says: "At least 95 percent of all animal fossils are of marine invertebrates."<sup>10</sup> My father has told me of walking through the mountains of Virginia as a boy, and finding sea shells on the mountains. How did sea shells get to the mountains? A world-wide flood is one possibility.

The interface between the sedimentary layers shows no signs of erosion. If you think of the Sphinx in Egypt and the rock of which it is made looks eroded today, then imagine the cracks, gullies, pits, and ditches that one would expect from a layer of rock over times spanning

much longer than the age of the Sphinx. Andrew Snelling tells us about this problem:

Traditional evolutionary geology maintains that the deposition of sediments to form major rock layers often takes long periods of time.

Once deposited, the sedimentation period involved is believed to have closed with a major change in climate and/or uplift of the ocean floor to form a new land surface. There often then followed, it is claimed, a lengthy time in which erosion of that land surface may have then removed large amounts of the previously deposited sediments. Such an eroded surface should be evidenced by gullies, stream and river canyons and valleys, and such like at the top of each major rock layer or layers.

...Over the long periods of time envisaged for these processes, erosion would erode the underlying layers and much more. One has difficulty envisaging little or nothing at all happening for millions of years on the surface of our planet. The gaps seem to suggest less time...<sup>11</sup>

You can see the effects of erosion in the image of the Sphinx (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Sphinx

<sup>6</sup> Morris J. 1999. The polystrate trees and coal seams of Joggins fossil cliffs. *Acts & Facts*. 28 (10). <<http://www.icr.org/article/445/>> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

<sup>7</sup> Juby IA. 2006. The fossil cliffs of Joggins, Nova Scotia. *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 43: 48-53.

<[https://creationresearch.org/members-only/crsq/43/43\\_1/2005v43n1p48.pdf](https://creationresearch.org/members-only/crsq/43/43_1/2005v43n1p48.pdf)> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

<sup>8</sup> Valdivieso J. 2009. Catastrophic geologic evidences in Ecuador: Part 2: Puyango petrified forest. <<http://tasc-creationscience.org/content/catastrophic-geologic-evidences-ecuador-part-2-puyango-petrified-forest>> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

<sup>9</sup> Austin SA. 1986. Mt. St. Helens and catastrophism. *Acts & Facts* 15(7). <<http://www.icr.org/article/mt-st-helens-catastrophism/>> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

<sup>10</sup> Morris J. 2010. The real nature of the fossil record. *Acts & Facts* 39 (2): 12-14. <<http://www.icr.org/article/real-nature-fossil-record/>> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

### Soft Tissue in Fossils

The finding of soft tissue in fossils, such as dinosaur bones, indicates they are not as old as originally thought (65 million years and older) since it is impossible by known science for soft tissue to last that long.<sup>12</sup> This throws the fossil timetable out of sync. This is a big problem for the chronology of the fossil record.

<sup>11</sup> Snelling A. 1992. The case of the 'missing' geologic time. *Creation* 14(3): 30-35. <<https://answersingenesis.org/geology/rock-layers/the-case-of-the-missing-geologic-time/>> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

<sup>12</sup> Enyart B. Dinosaur soft tissue is original biological material. <<http://kgov.com/dinosaur-soft-tissue>> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

## C14 in Fossils

There has now been found evidence that C14 is found in dinosaur bones, and the bones have been dated to be less than one tenth on 1 % as old as supposed per the evolutionary timetable.<sup>13,14,15</sup>

Well, we have looked at some of the problems with the fossil evidence. We have skimmed the surface since many articles and books could be written on this subject and have been. There are other problems, such as the Cambrian explosion and the lack of transitional forms. But perhaps you may see the evidence does not seem to be definitively clear-cut in favor of evolution.

Let us now look at statements of scientists, including evolutionists.

### Statements of Scientists

The following are taken from <http://evolutionfacts.com/Evolution-handbook/E-H-12a.htm>

It is not even possible to make a caricature [hazy sketch] of an evolution out of paleobiological facts. The fossil material is now so complete that...the lack of transitional series cannot be explained as due to the scarcity of the material. The deficiencies are real; they will never be filled.—\*N. Heribert-Nilsson, *Synthetische Artbildung* (The Synthetic Origin of Species), 1953, p. 1212.

...intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic change, and this is perhaps the most obvious and serious objection which can be urged against the theory [of evolution].—\*Charles Darwin, *Origin of the Species*, quoted in \*David Raup, "Conflicts Between Darwin and Paleontology," in *Field Museum Bulletin*, January 1979.

The intelligent layman has long suspected circular reasoning in the use of rocks to date fossils and fossils to date rocks. The geologist has never bothered to think of a good reply, feeling the explanations are not worth the trouble as long as the work brings results. This is supposed to be hard-headed pragmatism.—\*J.E. O'Rourke, "Pragmatism versus

Materialism and Stratigraphy," *American Journal of Science*, January 1976, p. 48.

Contrary to what most scientists write, the fossil record does not support the Darwinian theory of evolution, because it is this theory (there are several) which we use to interpret the fossil record. By doing so, we are guilty of circular reasoning if we then say the fossil record supports this theory.—\*Ronald R. West, "Paleontology and Uniformitarianism," in *Compass*, May 1968, p. 216.

And this poses something of a problem. If we date the rocks by their fossils, how can we then turn around and talk about patterns of evolutionary change through time in the fossil record?—\*Niles Eldredge, *Time Frames: The Rethinking of Darwinian Evolution*, 1985, p. 52.

The following are taken from <http://evolutionfacts.com/Evolution-handbook/E-H-12b.htm> [6]

Evolution requires intermediate forms between species, and paleontology does not provide them.—\*D.B. Kitts, *Paleontology and Evolutionary Theory* (1974), p. 467.

It is a feature of the known fossil record that most taxa appear abruptly. They are not, as a rule, led up to by a sequence of almost imperceptible changing forerunners such as Darwin believed should be usual in evolution.—\*G.G. Simpson, in *The Evolution of Life*, p. 149.

There is no need to apologize any longer for the poverty of the fossil record. In some ways it has become almost unmanageably rich, and discovery is outpacing integration . . . The fossil record nevertheless continues to be composed mainly of gaps.—\*T. Neville George, "Fossils in Evolutionary Perspective," in *Science Progress*, January 1960, pp. 1, 3.

The abrupt appearance of higher taxa in the fossil record has been a perennial puzzle. Not only do characteristic and distinctive remains of phyla appear suddenly, without known ancestors, but several classes of a phylum, orders of a class, and so on, commonly appear at approximately the same time, without known intermediates.—\*James W. Valentine and \*Cathryn A. Campbell, "Genetic Regulation and the Fossil Record," in *American Scientist*, November-December, 1975.

In spite of these examples, it remains true, as every paleontologist knows, that most new species, genera, and families, and that nearly all categories about the level of families, appear in the record suddenly and are not led up to by known, gradual, completely continuous transitional sequences.—\*G.G. Simpson, *The Major Features of Evolution* (1953), p. 360.

Sudden appearance: In any local area, a species does not arise gradually by the steady transfor-

<sup>13</sup> Enyart B (2014 Sep 12) Carbon 14 and dinosaur bones. <<http://kgov.com/carbon-14-and-dinosaur-bones>> Accessed 2016 Feb 01

<sup>14</sup> Creation Evolution Headlines (2015 Jun 18) Carbon-14 found in dinosaur bone. <<http://crev.info/2015/06/c14-dinosaur-bone/>> Accessed 2015 Jul 19

<sup>15</sup> Miller H, Owen H, Bennett R, de Pontcharra J, Giretych M, Taylor J, van Oosterwyck M, Kline O, et al. (2012 Aug 15) A Comparison of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  & pMC values for ten Cretaceous-Jurassic dinosaur bones from Texas to Alaska USA, China and Europe. Asia Oceania Geosciences Society (AOGS) - American Geophysical Union (AGU) Joint Assembly, Resorts World Convention Center, Singapore, 15 August, 2012

mation of its ancestors; it appears all at once and 'fully formed.' —\*Steven Jay Gould, "Evolution's Erratic Pace," in *Natural History*, May 1977, p. 14.

I fully agree with your comments on the lack of direct illustration of evolutionary transitions in my book. If I knew of any, fossil or living, I would certainly have included them. You suggest that an artist should be used to visualise [portray] such transformations, but where would he get the information from? I could not, honestly, provide it.

[Steven] Gould [of Harvard] and the American Museum people are hard to contradict when they say there are no transitional fossils. As a paleontologist myself, I am much occupied with the philosophical problems of identifying ancestral forms in the fossil record. You say that I should at least 'show a photo of the fossil from which each type of organism was derived.' I will lay it on the line—there is not one such fossil for which one could make a watertight argument. The reason is that statements about ancestry and descent are not applicable in the fossil record. It is easy enough to make up stories of how one form gave rise to another, and to find reasons why the stages should be favoured by natural selection. But such stories are not part of science, for there is no way of putting them to the test.—\*Dr. Colin Patterson, letter dated April 10, 1979 to Luther Sunderland, quoted in L.D. Sunderland, *Darwin's Enigma*, p. 89.

Most people assume that fossils provide a very important part of the general argument made in favor of Darwinian interpretations of the history of life. Unfortunately, this is not strictly true.—\*David Raup, "Conflicts between Darwin and Paleontology," in the *Field Museum of Natural History Bulletin*, January 1979.

We are now about 120 years after Darwin, and knowledge of the fossil record has been greatly expanded. We now have a quarter of a million fossil species but the situation hasn't changed much. The record of evolution is still surprisingly jerky and, ironically, we have even fewer examples of evolutionary transition than we had in Darwin's time! By this I mean that some of the classic cases of Darwinian change in the fossil record, such as the evolution of the horse in North America, have had to be discarded or modified as a result of more detailed information.—\*Dr. David Raup, in op. cit.

There is a growing conviction among many scientists that these transitional forms never existed.—\*Niles Eldredge, quoted in "Alternate Theory of Evolution Considered," in *Los Angeles Times*, November 19, 1978.

Evidence from fossils now points overwhelmingly away from the classical Darwinism which most Americans learned in high school...The missing link between man and the apes . . . is merely the most glamorous of a whole hierarchy of phantom creatures. In the fossil record, missing links are the rule. The more scientists have searched for the transitional forms between species, the more they have been frustrated.—\*Newsweek, November 3, 1980.

In any case, no real evolutionist, whether gradualist or punctuationist, uses the fossil record as evidence in favor of the theory of evolution as opposed to special creation.—\*Mark Ridley, "Who Doubts Evolution?" in *New Scientist*, June 25, 1981, p. 831.

One of the reasons I started taking this anti-evolutionary view, or let's call it a non-evolutionary view, was last year I had a sudden realization for over twenty years I had thought I was working on evolution in some way. One morning I woke up and something had happened in the night, and it struck me that I had been working on this stuff for twenty years and there was not one thing I knew about it. That's quite a shock to learn that one can be misled so long. Either there was something wrong with me or there was something wrong with evolutionary theory. Naturally, I knew there was nothing wrong with me, so for the last few years I've tried putting a simple question to various people and groups of people.

Question is: Can you tell me anything you know about evolution, any one thing, any one thing that is true? I tried that question on the geology staff at the Field Museum of Natural History [in Chicago], and the only answer I got was silence. I tried it on the members of the Evolutionary Morphology seminar in the University of Chicago, a very prestigious body of evolutionists, and all I got there was silence for a long time; and eventually one person said, 'I do know one thing—that it ought not to be taught in high school.' —\*Colin Patterson, address at American Museum of Natural History, November 5, 1981.

It is indeed, a very curious state of affairs, I think, that paleontologists have been insisting that their record is consistent with slow, steady, gradual evolution where I think that privately, they've known for over a hundred years that such is not the case. I view stasis and the trumpeting of stasis to the whole world that the fossil record shows slow, steady, continuous change (as opposed to jerky patterns of change) as akin to the 'Emperor's new clothes.' Paleontologists have known this for over a hundred years.—\*Norman Eldredge, "Did Darwin Get it Wrong?" November 1, 1981, p. 6 [head paleontologist, American Museum of Natural History, New York City].

Steven J. Gould, Harvard:

The following are taken from <http://evolutionfacts.com/Evolution-handbook/E-H-12d.htm> [7]

The evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and nodes of their branches; the rest is inference, however reasonable, not the evidence of the fossils. Nat.His., V.86, p.13.

We have had enough of the Darwinian fallacy. It is time that we cry: "The emperor has no clothes!" — \*Kenneth Hsu, "Darwin's Three Mistakes," in *Geology* 14 (1986), p. 534.

Stephen J. Gould, Harvard:

Every paleontologist knows that most species don't change. That's bothersome...brings terrible distress....They may get a little bigger or bumpier but they remain the same species and that's not due to imperfection and gaps but stasis. And yet this remarkable stasis has generally been ignored as no data. If they don't change, it's not evolution so you don't talk about it. Lecture at Hobart & William Smith College, 14/2/1980.

Niles Eldredge, Columbia U., American Museum Of Natural History:

And it has been the paleontologist- my own breed- who have been most responsible for letting ideas dominate reality: ...We paleontologist have said that the history of life supports that interpretation [gradual adaptive change], all the while knowing that it does not. *Time Frames*, 1986, p.144

I will stop here; more similar quotes could be added.

The summary of these quotes, from evolutionists, from experts in the field, indicate that the fossils show no evidence of gradual change.

#### **A Theory Searching for Evidence/A Theory Searching for a Mechanism**

Though the concept of evolution existed in some form or another before Darwin, Darwin brought to us a mechanism: natural selection. Then when we found that there wasn't enough time and that natural selection merely selected from a pool of already existing genes without creating new genetic material by itself, another mechanism was proposed: mutations! Some have pointed out problems with mutations (such as they tend to make things worse more often than better), so other ideas have been sought and proposed: the hopeful monster theory, punctuated equilibria, genetic algorithms, complexity theory, proposed methods of order arriving from chaos, and the RNA world hypothesis. It seems evolution is still seeking a mechanism and is also seeking evidence.

However, be that as it may, Darwin admitted that the fossil record did not support his theory, but hoped that, given time, the fossils yet to be found would fill in the gaps. However, as noted above, time has shown that the fossil record supports the evolutionary theory even less well now than it did in Darwin's time, as stated by an

evolutionary paleontologist who has taught at Caltech, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Rochester:<sup>16</sup>

We are now about 120 years after Darwin, and knowledge of the fossil record has been greatly expanded. We now have a quarter of a million fossil species but the situation hasn't changed much. The record of evolution is still surprisingly jerky and, ironically, we have even fewer examples of evolutionary transition than we had in Darwin's time! By this I mean that some of the classic cases of Darwinian change in the fossil record, such as the evolution of the horse in North America, have had to be discarded or modified as a result of more detailed information.<sup>5,</sup>

It seems from the above that the fossil record does not provide proof of the evolutionary hypothesis. Now after looking at the lack of evidence for evolutionary changes in organisms over time from the fossil record, we could conclude that the fossil record is actually better explained by a world-wide flood that buried organisms very rapidly in a short period of time and also created the rock strata in which they are found. ☞

### **COMING EVENTS**

**Thursday, February 11, 7:00 pm, Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Room 240**

We will watch a video entitled *The Horror of the Flood - The Most Catastrophic Event in History*. Mike Snavelly, President of Mission Imperative, will cover key aspects of the flood by answering questions including: Is there evidence for a global flood? Why was there a flood? What happened, and how? What was the ark really like? What did the flood cause?

Please come out to our meeting with your friends and family, ask your favorite question about the Genesis Flood, and participate in the discussions.

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<sup>16</sup> David M. Raup. 2015 Nov 02. <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_M.\\_Raup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_M._Raup) Accessed 2016 Feb 01