

Fossil ranges continue to expand

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Since I last reported on range expansions of fossils,¹ numerous more have appeared in the literature, a few of which have already been reported by other creationists. I had not planned on making this subject of range expansions a regular series, but evolutionary scientists continue to make so many major discoveries that extend the ranges of organisms in the fossil record that I will probably do so.

Antibiotic resistance older than development of antibiotics

Antibiotic resistance is thought to be a modern example of evolution in response to the development and widespread use of modern antibiotics. But in a new report, it has been discovered that antibiotic resistance was already built into the organisms well before antibiotics were even invented. Scientists recovered what they believe is 30,000-year-old² DNA from the permafrost in non-glaciated areas of the Yukon Territory of northwest Canada.³ Within it they discovered a highly diverse collection of genes that encoded resistance to three antibiotics.

Resistance to antibiotics before antibiotics were even developed was actually first discovered in 2004 when scientists from the University of Alberta in Edmonton revived bacteria from the remains of members of the Franklin Expedition who froze to death in the Arctic over 150 years ago.⁴ The bacteria were already resistant to antibiotics that were not developed until a century later.

This research shows that the antibiotic resistance was already part of the genetic variability within organisms, and it did not evolve in

modern times due to the selection pressures by antibiotics. Antibiotic resistance is much older, pushed back 30,000 years on the evolutionary timescale, and it probably was built into the genetic makeup of organisms at the Creation.

Monkey puzzle trees now found in Europe ... 18 Ma later

The Monkey Puzzle tree family is a classic Southern Hemisphere conifer with living representatives originating from Australia. The Monkey Puzzle tree now grows extensively as a garden plant worldwide (figure 1). The fossil record shows a near worldwide distribution in the Mesozoic, including many of the petrified trees in Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona, USA. It is believed most amber in the fossil record has originated from this tree.

According to the evolutionary story, the tree retreated to the Southern Hemisphere in the *middle* Cretaceous. Recently, the discovery of the scales of a Monkey Puzzle tree in Belgium has extended the range of this tree



Figure 1. A juvenile monkey puzzle tree.

upward 18 Ma to the *late* Cretaceous in the Northern Hemisphere.⁵

A turtle extended upward by 11 Ma through the K/T boundary

For over a century, a particular turtle, *Boremys*, was restricted to the Campanian of the late Cretaceous in North America. But now this easily identified turtle has been found in southwest North Dakota, USA, in the Maastrichtian Hell Creek and the Paleocene Ft Union Formations, extending the range of this turtle upward 11 Ma.⁶ It is interesting that this climate-sensitive reptile, with other such creatures, made it through the 'great extinction at the K/T boundary'.

Anomalocaris no longer restricted to the early and mid-Cambrian

Anomalocaris was the largest of the marine creatures found in the Burgess Shale of southern British Columbia, Canada. It had supposedly died out in the Cambrian at about 500 Ma ago. Now it is found in the early Ordovician of southeast Morocco, extending its range upward by about 30 Ma.⁷

Shrimp pushed back 125 Ma

Probably the most dramatic range extension was the discovery of the oldest-known shrimp in Oklahoma, USA, pushing back the first appearance of shrimp 125 Ma to 360 Ma!^{8,9} Even some of the muscles in the tail were preserved. This goes to show that if those 125 Ma are real, we should find many more fossils of shrimp within that time range. The preponderance of missing fossils within the uniformitarian paradigm tells us that there are still a lot of fossils in the rock record yet to be discovered, and that we can look forward to hundreds of more range extensions in the future.

Sponges pushed back into the late Precambrian

Sponges are among the oldest organisms in the fossil record, going back to the very latest Precambrian, called the Ediacaran.¹⁰ But a new discovery of possible sponge fossils was reported from South Australia and dated about 650 Ma old.¹¹ The fossils were found between two supposed ancient, possibly worldwide ‘glaciations’, the Sturtian, about 710 Ma ago, and the Marinoan, about 635 Ma ago, within the uniformitarian system.

Eutherian mammals pushed back 35 Ma

Various types of mammals continue to be pushed back well into the Mesozoic. A new Eutherian mammal was recently discovered in China that is claimed to be 160 Ma old, pushing back the evolutionary origin by about 35 Ma.¹² This discovery is said to resolve a discrepancy between the previous fossil record and molecular estimates of the placental-marsupial divergence.

A type of armadillo pushed back 12 Ma

Recently, a type of armadillo was found in the late Oligocene of Bolivia, pushing back this organism by 12 Ma.¹³ And just like the Eutherian mammal, it also resolved an evolutionary discrepancy between the molecular estimate of divergence from a common ancestor and its fossil record. One wonders whether the dating of these fossils has been influenced by the new molecular clock dates?

Haplogyne spiders pushed back 120 Ma

A small family of spiders from the southwest United States, Mexico, and the adjacent Caribbean area were found in Baltic and Dominican Republic amber. More recently, this family was discovered in Mongolia,

pushing back its fossil record 120 Ma to the middle Jurassic, 165 Ma ago within the uniformitarian timescale.¹⁴ Interestingly, these spiders are nearly identical, if not identical, to modern spiders in this family, showing no evolution during 165 Ma: “The morphology of *Eoplectreuryx* is remarkably similar to modern forms and thus demonstrates great evolutionary conservatism.”¹⁵

Discovery of the oldest fully aquatic whale announced

In October 2011, scientists from Argentina and Sweden announced the discovery of the jawbone of the oldest fully aquatic whale.¹⁶ It was dated to 49 Ma old. It tells evolutionists that whales evolved much more quickly from their presumed amphibious mammalian ancestors than previously thought.

Creationist implications

Evolutionists commonly challenge creationists to explain the order of the fossil record within the geological column. How can we oblige them when we still do not know the real fossil order? Besides raising questions of how the geological column fits in with biblical earth history,¹⁷ range extensions tell us that no-one yet knows the true vertical order of the fossils in the rock record. So, it is too soon to settle on a comprehensive answer to this question until hundreds more range extensions have been published.

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