

“Translated the scene reads: ‘I have been roasting since the beginning of time—I have never seen the like of this goose.’

“The three vertically placed hieroglyphs (read top to bottom) in front of the man’s head and raised hand are the one form of the Egyptian for ‘goose’, i.e. —○↗  
srw (see the three top to bottom). The other is —○↗↘ 6.”

Note the similarity of the goose being roasted to the hieroglyph in question, including the alleged ‘flippers’; the head and neck are missing for obvious culinary reasons. And when the hieroglyph is viewed close up, the head looks more like that of a waterbird than anything else.

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## Woolly and Columbian mammoths likely the same species

Michael J. Oard

The Bible says in Genesis 1 that animals and plants reproduce after their own kind. A Genesis kind is in most cases not the same as the subjective man-made category of *species*. A species is generally defined as an interbreeding unit that is reproductively isolated from other species, or in other words it does not or cannot interbreed with members outside its species.

Determining the boundaries of the Genesis kind is the subject of the creationist research initiative called baraminology.<sup>1,2</sup> It appears that many Genesis kinds are at about the family level in the Linnaean taxonomy.<sup>3</sup> One of the primary markers of a kind is the ability of different species to reproduce and have fertile offspring, such as the wolf and the domestic dog. So by this definition of ‘species’, the species that produce ‘hybrids’ should really be one species. On the other hand, the inability for two species or genera to interbreed does not necessarily make them separate kinds, since the reproductive system has been affected by the Curse in Genesis 3. Some animals do not normally interbreed because of behavioural characteristics but can have fertile offspring, and so would be in the same Genesis kind.

### The application of the kind to the number of animals on the Ark

Determining the average level of the kind has practical applications. One is determining the number of animals needed on the Ark, which critics claim are way too many for the size of the Ark. But if the average

kind is at the family level, there were probably no more than 2,000 animals on the Ark.<sup>4</sup> Woodmorappe was more conservative and assumed the average kind was at the genus level, and therefore 16,000 animals were required on the Ark. Both estimates show that there was plenty of room on the Ark for all the air-breathing terrestrial animals.<sup>5</sup> Critics should run their own calculations before speaking about the lack of room on the Ark or making any challenge to creationists for that matter.

### Woolly and Columbian mammoths interbred

Although there is a proliferation of names, mammoths have generally been classified into two genera within the order Proboscidea, which supposedly did not or could not interbreed.<sup>6</sup> One is the woolly mammoth, *Mammuthus primigenius*, which generally inhabited the high latitudes and continental interiors at mid-latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere. The second is the Columbian mammoth, *Mammuthus columbi*, which generally is found at mid-latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere but further south than the woolly mammoth. However, there is overlap in the ranges of these two mammoths.

The classification scheme is generally based on differences in their size, the height and shape of the teeth, number of ridges on the crown, and enamel thickness. Woolly mammoths are about 3 m tall at the shoulder while Columbian mammoths are very tall at about 4 m and are estimated to weight 9,000 kg (figure 1). The Columbian mammoth is thought to have evolved in North America while the woolly mammoth is believed to have entered North America from Siberia.

But these two ‘species’ are not distinct. There is a continuum between the two types of mammoths, making the designation of separate species suspect. Mammoth expert Gary Haynes states:

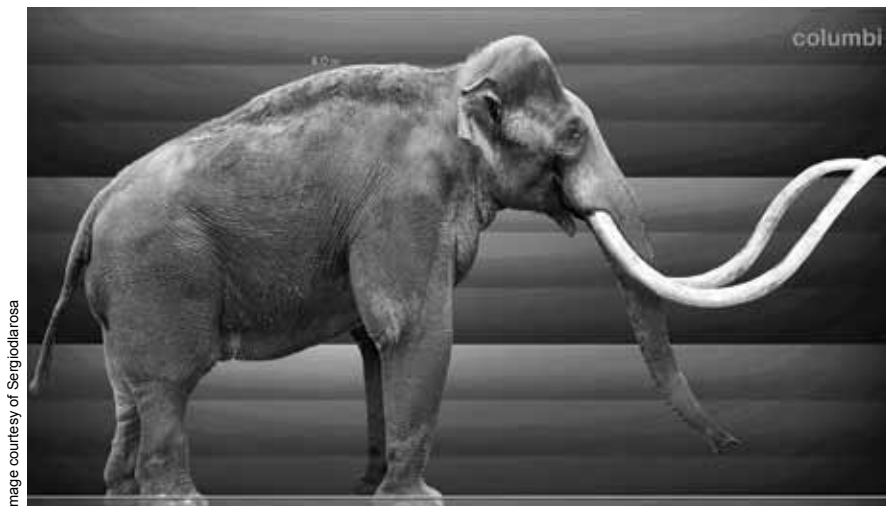


Image courtesy of Sergiolarosa

**Figure 1.** Columbian mammoth

“However, there may be a gradient [continuum] based on body size and tooth morphology that could indicate that *M. columbi* and *M. primigenius* were not descendants of two entirely separate dispersals . . . . No clear differences in postcranial morphology distinguish the two species; enamel thickness is considered partially diagnostic, but individual teeth and even parts of a given tooth have variable enamel thickness.”<sup>7</sup>

New information was just revealed at the 71<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology that indicates woolly and Columbian mammoths should be considered varieties within *one* species.<sup>8</sup> A mitochondrial DNA analysis of two Columbian mammoth specimens from Utah and Wyoming, USA, indicates that they carry woolly-mammoth-like DNA. Ross MacPhee was very surprised by his analysis and is quoted as saying:

“Woolly and Columbian mammoths may be so close that they should really be regarded as the same thing . . . . One extraordinarily variable species.”<sup>8</sup>

He goes on to say:

“There will be resistance to this conclusion because it is so unexpected.”<sup>8</sup>

It seems like the taxonomic splitters had a strong influence in mammoth classification, since the woolly and Columbian mammoths are not that different. The discovery, of course, is disputed by some who believe a lot more DNA evidence is needed to draw such a conclusion, such as an analysis of the nuclear DNA.

### Is the order Proboscidea one kind?

Mammoths are only one genus of the elephant order called Proboscidea, which also includes living elephants, extinct mastodons, and extinct gomphotheres—elephants with two more tusks in their lower jaw, one type of gomphotheres that has shovel-shaped lower tusks. Could all these elephant types be all one kind? Sarfati and I both think that they are possibly all one kind.<sup>9,10</sup> Furthermore, it is known that the two living types of elephants, the Asian and African elephants, defined as two different genera within the family Elephantiidae, can interbreed. Since the animals do not live together, the successful mating occurred by accident in the Chester Zoo in England.<sup>6</sup> The baby elephant died, however, 10 days later of a disease. If they did live together, there likely would be all kinds of intermediate types, and researchers would probably

conclude that these elephants should belong to the same species.

### Creationist implication

The new discovery that woolly and Columbian mammoths are really one species further indicates that taxonomic splitters have established species, mainly by morphology, too liberally. Moreover, it adds one more piece of data that supports the biblical kind at a higher taxonomic level than the species, and that all elephants, living and fossils, are probably one kind.

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