Factsheet No. 3

MUTATIONS & MIRACLES

THE problem facing evolutionists is to find a satisfactory *mechanism* for the proposed evolutionary change from single-celled organisms to modern life-forms. Natural selection, which Darwin preferred, cannot be that mechanism, since it does not create new genetic information. Most modern evolutionists (*neo-Darwinists*) would say that genetic mistakes known as mutations are the mechanism of evolution. Well-known evolutionist Ernst Mayr wrote: 'It must not be forgotten that mutation is the ultimate source of all genetic variation found in natural populations and the only new material available for natural selection to work on.'[1] It is claimed that, over time, these genetic 'mistakes' have accumulated to bring about major changes to living organisms, and even completely new kinds of creatures and plants. Is this true? What are the facts about mutations?

MUTATIONS RARE, USUALLY HARMFUL

It is important to note that mutations are not common. 'Natural mutations occur very rarely, less than one in a million generations. The frequency of mutations can be greatly increased by certain chemicals or radiation'[2] Indeed, many mutations are lethal. The word 'mutant' conjures up images of monstrosity and deformity, and most mutant forms have lower survival value — the very opposite of what evolution needs. Harmful mutations are not always obvious; in fact most of them are invisible, as one expert has pointed out: 'Lethal mutations outnumber visibles by about 20 to 1. Mutations that have small harmful effects, the detrimental mutations, are even more frequent than the lethal ones.'[3] The potential for mutations to cause genetic damage is one reason why the ozone layer is so important to us, since it shields us from harmful cosmic rays. Mutations have also been caused by radio-active fallout from such sources as the Hiroshima bomb and the Chernobyl nuclear power station disaster. People who work in X-Ray departments also have to take great care to protect themselves from radiation. In view of these facts, it seems incredible that evolutionists believe that mutations have produced the wonderful variety of life we see on earth today.

MUTANT CALF: This calf, born on a Somerset farm in the last century, was hairless, except for a tuft on its tail. It did not survive for long. When it died it was found to have all its hair on the inside of its skin!

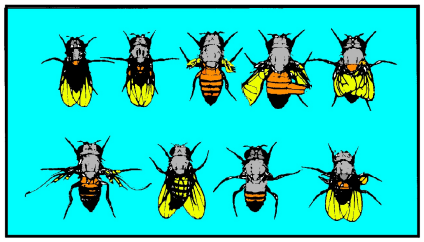
The Flightless Cormorant

MUTATIONS DON'T ADD INFORMATION

It is sometimes claimed that there are no beneficial mutations, but this is not strictly true. Mutations can be beneficial to an *individual species*. For example, some insects on wind-swept islands have lost their wings. This is advantageous, since it prevents them from being blown into the sea. The Flightless Cormorant of the Galapagos Islands has lost the power of flight, but because of its atrophied wings it can swim and dive more effectively. However, we must note that in each of these cases mutations have resulted in the *loss* of genetic information. The insects have lost the information for wings, and the cormorants the information for wings that can fly. Neither, therefore, will be able to regain the power of flight. Dr Lee Spetner wrote: 'Not even one mutation has been observed that adds a little information to the genome.[4] Indeed, most mutations result in its loss.

EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE

In an attempt to prove that mutations are a mechanism for evolution, scientists conducted experiments on the *Drosophila Melanogaster* fruit fly. These fast-breeding flies were bombarded with X-Rays to induce mutations, and some changes in structure were observed; some flies were born with no eyes, some with deformed or useless wings. There were also changes in shape, size, colour, and the number of hairs on their bodies. However, no beneficial mutations were observed, and throughout the experiments they remained fruit flies! Dr Spetner has outlined the serious problems facing those who believe that the accumulation of beneficial mutations can bring about evolutionary change: 'For cumulative selection to work, a lot of good mutations have to occur by chance. At each step of cumulative selection, a mutant with a positive selective value has to appear. It also has to be lucky enough to survive and eventually to take over the population. Then another good mutation has to appear for the next step, and so on. The neo-Darwinians seem to think the chance of all this happening is large enough to make evolution work. But no one has ever shown that to be so. No one has ever shown that such a thing is likely — or even possible!'[5]



Irradiated fruit flies

MIRACLES WITHOUT GOD?

We have seen that mutations are rare, and that most mutations are harmful. We have also noted that mutations never add new genetic information, but usually result in its loss. Finding a source for new genetic information — which is essential if real evolution is to happen — is one of the biggest problems facing evolutionists today. Dr Lee Spetner says: 'Just like a fortune can't be made by losing money, evolution can't build up information by losing it. Moreover, before you can lose money, or information, you first have to make it.'[6] Spetner calculated the odds of developing a single new species through mutation, using accepted mutation rates and frequency of beneficial mutations. The resulting odds are one in 3.6 x 10^{2738} or 36 followed by 2,737 zeroes. French zoologist Pierre-Paul Grassé commented: 'A single plant, a single animal, would require thousands and thousands of lucky, appropriate events. Thus, miracle would become the rule; events with an infinitesimal probability could not fail to occur.'[7]

In order to preserve the secular view of life's origin, evolutionists are being forced to believe in the impossible — miracles without God! Creationists are in the best position. By its very nature creation was a supernatural, unrepeatable event. 'God said..... and it was so.' *(Genesis 1)*. When God created the various organisms 'according to their kinds', each kind was endowed with a rich gene pool. This enabled each kind to survive and adapt, but the gene pool would become depleted over time, and mutations — even the rare beneficial ones — would never add any new information.

References:
1. *Populations, Species and Evolution* (1970) p. 103
2. *Oxford Illustrated Encyclopaedia of the Natural World*, Guild Publishing, London, (1985) p. 223.
3. A. M. Winchester, *Genetics,* 5th edition (1977) p. 356.
4. *Not by Chance! Shattering the Modern Theory of Evolution*, The Judacia Press, Inc. (1998), p. 160.
5. As reference 4, p. 91.
6. As reference 4, p. 132.
7. *Evolution of Living Organisms,* (Academic Press, New York), 1977) p. 103.

Factsheets published regularly by Creation Resources Trust, P O Box 3237, Yeovil, BA22 7WD.
Registered charity No. 1016666. www.c-r-t.co.uk