A CREATIONISTS' TAXONOMY

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The amount of data uncovered by creationists in recent years warrants application of such information in various branches of science, of which one is in the field of plant and animal taxonomy. This branch of science is currently totally evolution-oriented, as is seen particularly in the determination of species, since the evolutionist considers each species the newly evolved kind. Nevertheless, there is no overall consensus as to what constitutes a species. This article lists a number of instances in which taxonomists ignore their own definition of species.

A creationist's approach to taxonomy is proposed, by establishing a category which would encompass all variants of each created "kind". This category should be called baramin, its position in the classification system varying for each species. All organisms would be placed in a particular baramin category whose eggs and sperm, when brought together, can produce true fertilization, thus making this the one truly biological category. Morphologically similar organisms could also be tentatively placed in the same category pending further studies.

Introduction

In recent years creationists have uncovered and produced a considerable amount of information demonstrating the fact that the Genesis account of creation can be as valid, indeed more so, from a scientific basis as is the theory of origins advanced by evolutionists. I believe the creationists have now reached a point in time at which their data need to be synthesized and utilized in the various branches of science. Until we as creationists demonstrate that our concepts are applicable in practice, other scientists will have reason or at least excuse to ignore our findings.

One area in which creationism will eventually have to stand or fall exists in the field of plant and animal taxonomy. At present, this phase of biological science is based entirely on the belief that all living species evolved through natural processes out of less complex forms of life. For this reason, when a systematist classifies a plant or animal, his goal is not only to give this organism an identity, but also, to determine what that organism's relationship is to other organisms evolutionwise. The 1965-66 Annual Report of the Harvard University Museum of Comparative Zoology frankly stated on p. 28: "Almost all the research carried out in the Museum has an evolutionary aspect. This is as true for the purely taxonomic research as for that dealing with biogeography, behavior, or ecology." Nowhere does this approach to the science of taxonomy manifest itself more than in the determination of "species". It is probably for this reason, too, that there is still no overall consensus as to the definition of the term "species".

What is a Species?

In *Each After His Kind* Cole wrote: ". . . systematics plays a double role, viz., the defining, describing and naming of groups, with inference that in arranging them their descent, and hence their genetic relationship, is being portrayed at the same time. This duality of modern taxonomy has often been pointed out and the proposal to divorce naming completely from any implications as to a relationship has been suggested by a number of authors as a panacea for nomenclatorial ills . . . There is much disagreement as to whether there is really any such definite entity as a species, and although numberless attempts have been made to define it, and tomes have been written on the subject, no universally acceptable definition has been forthcoming".[1] In an effort to overcome some of the shortcomings of the current concept involving "species", Blair proposed two categories of species populations: 1) those that are isolated from all other populations by reason of sterility, and 2) those that are isolated at any given moment by mechanisms short of intersterility.[2] Dobshansky suggested that: "The development of reproductive isolation between two or more related populations may reasonably be considered the attainment by these populations of the rank of separate species".[3] In his classic attempt to summarize the status of the species concept, Huxley wrote: "It would appear that species may be properly regarded as natural units, in that they are groups which (a) have a geographical distribution area; (b) are self-perpetuating as groups; (c) are morphologically (or in rare cases only physiologically) distinguishable from other related groups; and (d) normally do not interbreed with related groups, in most cases showing partial or total infertility on crossing with them (though neither the lack of crossing or of fertility is universal)."[4] Mayr devoted more than 600 pages toward an effort to develop his own concept of what constitutes a species. For him the decisive criterion is the reproductive isolation of a population.[5]

Species Difficulties

The foregoing seem, on the face of it, to present us with clear-cut definitions of the terms "species". As pointed out by this author, in *Evolution or Degeneration—Which?* there are involved, however, some formidable difficulties, of which at least three are called to our attention:

1. There are may "reproductively isolated" groups of animals and of plants which should be classified as "good species"; among which, however, numerous individuals have many characteristics that are different from those of other individuals in that same group. The taxonomist trying to work up an overall description of that species must then either give these differing groups subspecific rank; or, ignoring the definition of species he has set up for himself, make separate species of these groups—despite the fact that they interbreed naturally. Here are some examples.

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that the term "genus" be applied to "kind".[9] In light of known plant and animal crosses not only between species or genera, but even between families, Marsh proposed a new name which would suggest none of the "confused and arbitrary categories of present-day nomenclature". His choice of the term baramin (from the Hebrew roots, *bara* created, and *min*, kind),[10, 11] seems particularly appropriate. It would seem, then, that a concerted effort should be made by creationists to utilize and popularize this explicit and meaningful term. I would furthermore propose that technical names in the baramin category be given the suffix "min", to give them a distinguishing identity.

Where To Place the New Category

Where would it be most appropriate to place the baramin category in the classification system now used by taxonomists? I believe its position would vary with each plant and animal species. In each case it would depend on the extent of our current knowledge about that species. The criterion would always be that all organisms be placed in the baramin category whose eggs and sperm, when brought together, can produce true fertilization. The geneticists, the plant and animal breeders, zoo-keepers and horticulturists: these would be the specialists on whom the creationists would have to rely, to determine which organisms to group into a baramin. A start can, however, be made for every known living organism, simply by using the knowledge now available.

Since we know that there is no evidence of any case of true fertilization taking place between *Homo sapiens* and any other species of mammal, the baramin in this case would be at the species level.

Since successful crosses have been made between the following species of *Peromyscus* mice: *P. leucocephalus*, *maniculatus*, and *polionotus*,[12, 13] the baramin for these would be at the genus level. All other *Peromyscus* species should be included on a provisional basis, for morphological reasons, until their true status is determined through breeding experiments.

Since crossings have been reported between swans and geese, between geese and ducks, and between various species of each tribe,[14, 15], the baramin for these would be above the family level. In other words, the baramin waterfowl would include ducks, geese, and swans. The taxonomic table would appear as follows:

Phylum: Chordata
Subphylum: Vertebrata
Class: Aves
Subclass: Neornithes (True Birds)
Superorder: Neognathae (Typical Birds)
Order: Anseriformes (Lamellate-billed Swimmers)
BARAMIN: ANATMIN (WATERFOWL)
Family: Anatidae (Swans, Geese, and Ducks)
Subfamily: Cygninae: Swans
Anseranatinae: Semi-palmated Geese
Anserinae: Geese
Subfamily: Dendrocygninae: Tree Ducks
Anatinae: Dabbling Ducks
Nyrocinae: Bay, Sea or Diving Ducks
Oxyurinae: Ruddy and Masked Ducks
Merginae: Mergansers
Genus
Species
Subspecies

The taxonomist's Family category embraces at least eight different subfamilies exhibiting combinations of certain obvious morphological peculiarities. Thus, when baramin is here placed above the Family category, the creationist is indicating that he has evidence that most, if not all, of the species of birds found below this category are probably variants of an originally created type of waterfowl. While a certain number of species are as yet included primarily on a morphological basis, guess-work can eventually be eliminated through breeding experiments.

The Magnificence Of Kinds

There may be those who will fear that we are here admitting an evolutionary process at work. This we would deny, for several reasons. The creationist does not doubt or deny the potential for variation in God's created "kinds". In fact, in the case of these many waterfowl species we have here a remarkable demonstration of the magnificence of our Lord's created kinds. He imbued His creatures with vast potentials for variation. But he also indicated that each would produce after his kind, thereby giving each "kind" a fixity which would forever insure the fact that it would retain its identity. Had this not been done, these unique creatures would long ago have lost their distinction.[16] This has not happened. We can tell waterfowl from sparrows or eagles today as well as could men centuries ago. Neither do we believe that the development of these approximately 250 species of waterfowl took place through an evolutionary process as visualized by the evolutionist. The mere fact that an originally created kind of waterfowl had the genetic potential for so great a variety of offspring, whereas these descendants lack this genetic potential, would seem to indicate that rather a process of degeneration has taken place.[17]

Conclusion

The system of taxonomy currently in use, can be utilized by the creationist through the use of one additional category. By inserting the term "baramin" for any organism, at the systematic level at which our present knowledge indicates cross-fertilization can occur, he can indicate what he considers the Genesis kind to have been.

Acknowledgement

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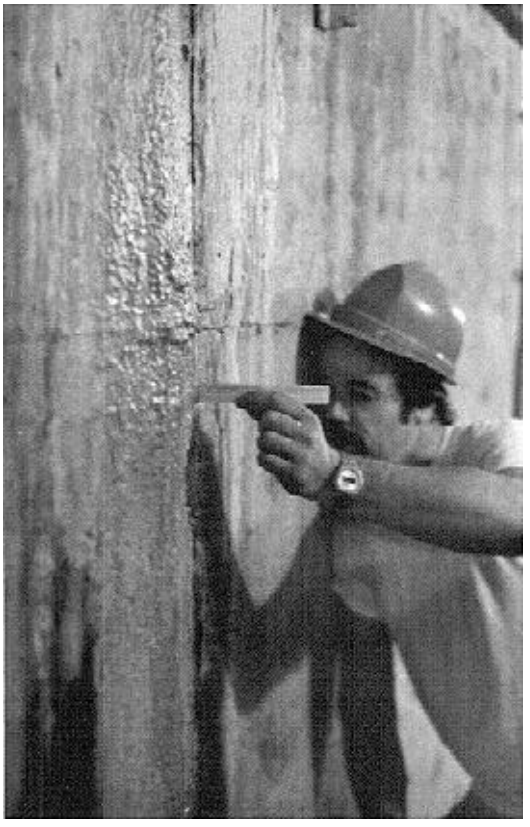

Figure 3. August 26, 1977. This rock flow in Tunnel B measured 22 mm thick.

natural" factors that may have affected their growth rate.

1. Chemicals are added to the water to facilitate floe formation in the clarifier (Table 1). The effect this would have on stalactite growth requires further investigation.
2. The acidic conditions of the water above Tunnel A (pH 5.3) and to a lesser extent above Tunnel B (pH 6.7) would aid in dissolving the cement as the water seeps through cracks in the roofs.
3. The $Ca(OH)_2$ in the cement roofs is more soluble than the $CaCO_3$ of natural limestone.
4. There is an average water flow of 9500 U.S. G.P.M. above the tunnels. The water level above Tunnel A is 16' and above Tunnel B, 3.5'. There is a large amount of available water.
5. The roofs of the tunnels are very thin in comparison with natural caves (1.3' in Tunnel A and 0.7' in Tunnel B). The water dripping through the roof has only a short distance in which to dissolve the cement. In natural caves the distance would be much greater.

Conclusion

Rapid stalactite formation has been observed in cement tunnels in a water treatment plant. Although conditions in the tunnels closely simulate natural caves, the large volumes of water, the acidity of the water, the chemical additives in the water and the higher solubility of the cement roofs may have promoted rapid stalactite formation. These considerations, however, do not detract from the observed fact that under certain conditions stalactites do form rapidly.

Acknowledgement

The data given here are used by permission of Consolidated-Bathurst Ltd., of whose plant the tunnels men tioned form a part.

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