

# Peppered Moths

Is natural selection a problem for creationism?

By Duane D. Miller

“A Cambridge University professor has completed a 6-year experiment with peppered moths that he says should conclusively rebut creationist claims.” [1]

That was the first line from the Random Samples section titled “Last word on moths” in the September 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 issue of Science Magazine stating Majerus reported his findings at a recent meeting of the European Society for Evolutionary Biology in Sweden. It is commonly proclaimed that natural selection is a proof for evolution however is natural selection a good way to demonstrated evolution is working? In the short blurb from Science magazine geneticist Michael Majerus runs a 6-year experiment which he reported back in 2004 Science. [2] In Majerus’ experiment, he released black or white moths into a cylindrical cage on branches at dusk. By morning, the number of moths that disappeared compared to the number of moths remaining is counted. The results are definitive evidence that natural selection is at work. In the study, 21% of the white moths were eaten by birds where 26% of the black ones were eaten indicating the white moths are favoured.

The idea that natural selection is a mechanism for evolution is a long standing one but is it adequate to prove evolution is occurring? Natural selection is the process which species best adapt to their environment to survive. This process of adaptation of an organism to its environment occurs by selectively reproducing changes in its genotype. God provided sufficient genetic diversity within a species to increase an organism’s chance of survival, reproduction of the surviving organism’s results in carrying on of genetic information that favours the environment. I propose the reproduction of certain genetic traits which have been selectively chosen is not sufficient to justify evolution is working. Evolution requires the production of new genetic information while in the case of natural selection this simply is not occurring. In order to demonstrate this further, let us look closer at what natural selection is all about.

## Natural Selection

Natural selection is simply the natural effect of a sinful world on living organisms which choose out the ones that can survive from those that cannot handle the environment they find themselves in dying as a result. In this article we find natural selection as a claim for evidence that evolution is in action. I believe this article and countless others demonstrate a poor understanding of what evolution really is all about. I can say this because evolution and natural selection are two entirely different things.

In evolutionary textbooks we generally see two types of peppered moths specifically the English peppered moth (*Biston betularia*). The English peppered moth comes with a variety of colours where one is a jet black and the other moth is peppered. In the case presented in science text books the speckled trees in Britain provides an excellent

camouflage for the black variety of the moth where the peppered moths stuck out and were easily taken as food for birds. Therefore, the black moth is favoured, its population increases, while the peppered moth's population decreases and is less favoured. In the case of the black both, the genes which produce the blackness are favoured and thus moths whose genes express the black colour become more common. So the numbers of genes which produce the black colour are seen more frequently. Likewise, the genes for peppered colour decrease. In conclusion, the ratio of genes changes with respect to black versus peppered moths. Interestingly however notice in the article presented in the September 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 issue of Science there are 21% white moths eaten and 26% black moths eaten. Therefore, there are both black and white genes in the beginning and there are black and white genes in the end. I do not see any new genetic information developing from the natural selection process that is occurring. There is no new information.

### **Conclusions**

Evolution is a biological theory that animals and plants have their origins in other types of animals and plants but with distinguishable differences due to successive generations of mutations. At the heart of Darwinian evolution, the mechanism of natural selection is what causes individual organisms to survive. The variation causes the survival and consequential reproduction passing their advantage to succeeding generations of organisms. The author of the article uses the process of natural selection to promote the idea that evolution is in action. But in the same way, creationists can also use the concept of natural selection to demonstrate that God designed his creation with enough genetic diversity to allow survival even in the most extreme of environments. In the case of the peppered moth, the genetic variation enables the moth to be born as black, white, or peppered colours all of which are camouflaging abilities that are already built in, and not resulting from new genetic information.

The creation model predicts that original animals, plants, and humans had been given a large genetic diversity that is slowly declining with time. The genetic diversity enables species to adapt to their environment for survival purposes. The process of adaption occurs by natural selection in the case of plants and animals are not the mechanism for speciation because there is no new genetic information. So the claim that speciation has occurred through natural selection seems like an unusual answer and is very inadequate. Darwin's concept of natural selection is quite easy to understand but it is also easy to misunderstand. It seems to me that natural selection works because God created sufficient variety to multiply and fill the earth as he commanded in the book of Genesis. I believe this points to an important discovery which is evidence for both God's creation (the variation) and to corruption of creation (struggle and death).

In Genesis chapter 1 we read that God created the animals and plants after their kind. The phrase after its kind or after their kind is God's way of explaining to use that he designed distinct kinds of animals and plants and for each to reproduce after its own kind. The observable changes and variation within each created kind is evidence that fits exactly with what the Bible teaches and opposite to what is taught by evolution.

## References

1. Majerus, M., *Last Word on Moths*. Science, 2007. **317**(5843).
2. Majerus, M., *In Defense of Darwin and a Former Icon of Evolution*. Science, 2004. **304**(5679): p. 1894-1895.