

Re: Homo Erectus was *not* a hunter/runner.

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- *From:* "Claudius Denk" <claudiusdenk@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 20 Dec 2007 05:32:22 GMT
-

"charles" <charles.uzzell@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:565fc2da-daf8-4d68-b3ca-2c34c07f21bb@xx

On Dec 17, 11:03 am, claudiusd...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx wrote:
<snip>
<http://tinyurl.com/8fomk>
<snip>

Okay. I read this.... The ECOLOGICAL GATEKEEPER HYPOTHESIS

I have several questions.

1. Did East Africa also enter a time of increased glaciation about 10 mya?

It's on the equator.

Does the fellow you quote, Yousef Khan, have a reference for

this?

2. You state that prior to 10 mya, there was little or no migration of "relatively large mammals."

Uh huh.

Do you have a reference for this?

No. Do you dispute it?

It is
my understanding that migration has been on the planet for quite a
long time.

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Uh, how long. Provide references if you can.

For example, some birds migrate as a remnant of their dinosaur ancestor inheritance.

Reference?

Also, prior to about 12 kya, there were significantly more large mammals on earth than there are at the present time. And there are ocean animals that migrate, implying that the habit of migrating is quite ancient.

Let's just say that the onset of monsoon habitat, starting with the late miocene, about 8 mya, there was a significant increase. This follows from the fact that a monsoon habitat has a dry season.

3. You state: "Other herbivores may not have directly competed with them, but all of them brought predators with them: lions, tigers, hyenas, dogs, etc. " I don't understand why this is important.

Good question. It's important because they are prey.

I am

not being obtuse here. If the predators are following the migration, then they would just keep on going, following the migration, and it would have no impact on the community that it passes through.

If the predators felt they had easier prey by staying and waiting them out of the trees they would do so. This would draw the attention of even more predators. What resulted was often a siege/massacre lasting days and weeks. The more successful the predators were the longer they stayed. The longer they stayed the more desperate and stressed they became (along with any other tree-dwelling creatures). The more desperate and stressed they became the more predators it drew into the continuing siege/massacre. The end result might have often been the complete extinction of a community.

Let's

look briefly at when humans were the predators, following the herds of animals from Siberia into North America. They followed them. They didn't stop along the way and harrass the little rabbits or penguins

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or whatever was in the way.

Irrelevant. (Obviously.)

I think you need to show, within your hypothesis, how migration differs 10 mya from what we have today.

I did mention that the patterns were different back then. Shorter. Bigger animals. Wetter habitat. Migration was local, not regional as it often is currently in east Africa.

Has

migration, as a function of nature, changed? Or, conversely, are you saying that the migrators were arriving at our ancestors "treed havens" as the end of a migration cycle?

I'm saying it would have been an annual event: in during the dry season and out again with the return of rains.

In that case, then I am not

certain, I am unclear as to how this would work, that our ancestors could use "territorial based peskiness" to chase them away.

It seems like such a simple concept I don't see how you can object.

That is,

a migration is a huge event,

I think you missed some details. I explained this. You are basing this on observation of current migration in east Africa. Not good. Conditions were different back then. It was wetter. And humans were not yet ecologically dominant (think about this).

and it tends to overwhelm most of what is

there. I am thinking of all those wildebeasts (?) that drown during migrations, or of lemmings going over cliffs. The migrating creature is going to consume what it needs when it gets there, predators or treed-habitats be-damned.

Yeah, that's what I thought. Most people will think of wildebeasts. But

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what I'm suggesting is different, as I explained. Read it again. You'll see.

4. I am having trouble seeing how "our" territorial based peskiness differs from that in the modern day chimpanzee.

Good. It wasn't different. This is important. The behavior was the same but the evolutionary-selective results were different because the situational factors of the environment were so different, as indicated.

or in, say, my Betta

fish. Do you, meanwhile, make a distinction between territory and mating behaviours? To my understanding, there are a lot of various types of territory and mate-protection strategies in primates.

Yeah, so?

5. You state, "But our tree dwelling ancestors, being less mobile, had fewer options." Were we less mobile? Gorillas, Chimps, and Humans do not seem to be immobilized today.

I wasn't comparing them to apes. I was comparing them to other contemporaneous species of similar size.

I live in North Carolina, a state

that was heavily... completely.... logged of trees since 1492. However, it was said that a squirrel could travel from the mountains to the coast and never touch the ground prior to this logging. My point is that our ancestors were probably quite active in the trees, very adept. Also, our ancient ancestor is believed to have come from Europe... probably mostly via the trees... sometime prior to 21 mya.

In the monsoon/savanna forest habitat of my hypothesis treed localities are isolated. There is no continuous treed habitat.

6. I have questions about your comments on cooperation, communicativeness and consciousness, but that can wait for now.

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7. You say, "Additionally, this scenario is the perfect setup for the scenario in my larger hypothesis (which I now realize is much more dependent upon the pre-existence of a community), which better explains the evolution of other hominid traits, such as our political, ideological nature, our attentiveness to dance, art, storytelling, and other artistic, our economic predisposition for trade, our complex and logic oriented languages, and our pursuit of knowledge and truth." My question is rather specific in this case. You use the word "languages" with an "s." Isn't human language more likely to have been a singular event? It occurred more or less just one time, or at a certain time in the evolution of our species, and at that moment, there was only one language.

I don't know why we'd have to assume only one language. In my hypothesis there was a tremendous amount of isolation between different A'pith communities. Hundreds of years might go by without them being aware of the existence of other communities in their region.

You asked some intelligent questions. Good going.

"Jim McGinn View profile
ECOLOGICAL GATEKEEPER HYPOTHESIS: an addendum the Ideological Ape Hypothesis
This addendum resolves a significant shortcoming that I had with the larger hypothesis. Strangely enough, it was only after I had hit upon this addendum that it even occurred to me that my larger hypothesis had this shortcoming. (Talk about falling in love with one's own pet theory.) What was the shortcoming? It has to do with the transition from the chimpanzee lifestyle (small, rambling bands) to the more situated, property oriented, communalism. I had assumed the transition would have been natural, a direct result of implications associated with the change in environmental conditions (seasonal desiccation, patchiness of the remaining forested habitat, etc.). It turns out I was right. It was natural. But I was wrong to have assumed that it would have been (or could have been) just as simple as that. More specifically, I had them cooperating, communicating, (In the context of a situated community) and evolving consciousness before they really had an evolutionary upramp to begin being selected for such behaviors. With this addendum I think this problem is solved. Additionally, this addendum provides a better understanding of why and how bipedalism and manipulative abilities began to be selected in the earliest years of hominid evolution. Additionally it seems to explain the human predisposition for sports fanaticism and the human tendency to be confrontational to and otherwise controlling of other species. Let me begin by showing you two posts that triggered my thinking:
***** From sci.bio.paleontology: <snip> . . . about 10mln years ago the Earth

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entered climatic roller-coaster, with periods of advancing and retreating glaciation. <snip> <snip> . . . the very fact that the Earth became a colder and more inhospitable place to live, led to the creation of man, so we shouldn't complain too loudly about how cold it is outside. If the Earth were still warm and wet, then we'd just have big, dumb, lumbering creatures who would just eat easy-to-find plants all day long -- doesn't require the development of much intelligence. <snip> Yousuf Khan

***** From sci.bio.evolution: I fail to understand why people are sports fans. They spend a lot of money, and they yell and scream when their home-town football team wins. When they move to another town they just as ardently yell and scream for their new home-town team, although the new team may have been the opponent of the previous team. This behavior seems to defy rational analysis. Why scream and yell, anyway, just because a bunch of millionaires beat each other up in a public arena? Is this behavior possibly a leftover from eons ago when it was important (a survival factor) to look up to tribal leaders, to cheer them on, and to claim solidarity with them? It seems to me that, in this day and age, evolution would favor survival factors in the intellectual arena, and yet, here are these masses of people who get excited about strangers who beat each other up, as in football.. Can anyone explain the phenomenon? Walter

***** The relevance of this second post will become obvious once you get into this explanation. The first of these two posts is the most important. It really jarred my perspective into considering something I hadn't considered before: previous to 10mya there was little or no migration but there has been a lot since then. (I'm thinking mostly of relatively large mammals here. Let's say about the size of a housecat and bigger. But it really includes any and all species that migrate.) I started to wonder if there might not be more than a coorelation between the observation that hominids appeared at or about at the same time that large mammals started to become migratory. Might it be causal? In other words, might an environment that is characterized by migrating species be an environment that provides selective factors that triggered hominid evolution? With this question in mind, I started thinking about migration in the context of the environmental assumptions of my hypothesis: seasonal dessication, spatial polarity of resources (patches of forest that persist near sources of perennial water, lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, areas of high ground water). (For a more comprehensive description of the environmental assumptions of this hypothesis see a post I put on this newsgroup recently entitled: Questions Regarding Selective . . .) Then I asked myself what kind of migrational patterns would I expect given these assumptions. The answer was obvious. During periods increasing dessication and resulting scarcity there would be a tendency for all of the species in this environment to begin to migrate toward and into these treed havens, our ancestor's "community sites." And with the onset of the rainy season they would migrate back out again. Then I started thinking about how all of this would appear from the

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perspective of our earliest, recently rainforest dwelling, prehominid ancestors. Every year their patches of remaining forest, their "community sites," got overrun with other species. Many of these species would have competed directly with them for food and thus would have caused the depletion of resources at a time when these resources were increasingly scarce, the dry season. Other herbivores may not have directly competed with them, but all of them brought predators with them: lions, tigers, hyenas, dogs, etc. The negative implications are obvious. When these immigrating species had depleted the resources at these community sites they would simply migrate over to other less depleted areas (other community sites). But our tree dwelling ancestors, being less mobile, had fewer options. They were now left vulnerable to starvation and/or predation. Lacking the ability to run fast, they didn't have much choice but to stay put, wait out the predators, and hope the rains returned. Surely their population would often have been decimated as a result. Among a number of other adaptations, which I will get to shortly, I predict that territorial based peskiness will have begun to be selected among our chimpanzee-like ancestor. This would have been a direct result of the above described factors associated with migration. The reason I believe this scenario predicts the relatively rapid adaptation of territorial based peskiness behaviors among these still tree dwelling apes is because apes that have such predisposition will tend to harass any other animals that it perceives to be trespassing on its territory. This will act as a deterrent to these immigrating species who—all other things being equal—will follow the path of least resistance to their migratory goals. If one patch of forest is associated with pesky apes—regardless of the fact that these pesky apes may be mostly harmless to them—and another patch of forest is relatively free of pesky apes then the immigrating individuals would follow the path of least resistance to the patch that is relatively free of pesky apes. More specifically, how and why do I contend that these above mentioned implications predict the rapid adaptation of territorial peskiness amongst our earliest prehominid ancestors? I think the answer to this question is fairly obvious. The members of community sites that reduced immigration, even if only marginally (let's say, for example, they reduced it by only 10%), would increase their own community's probability of surviving through and, at one and the same time, reduce the probability of survival of those who reside at other, neighboring, community sites who, lacking territorial based peskiness behaviors, would now have to deal with more immigration and, of course, more of the negative implications thereof: more depletion of resources, more predators, and more resulting decimation. This comprises a classic group selectionist scenario: behavior that increases one's own communities survival decreases the survival of other communities. This is not to say that the members of these respective communities would have had the ability to recognize that they were competing against other communities on a community vs. community basis. In fact it seems unlikely—especially in the earliest years of hominid evolution—that they would have even had the ability to recognize that they were members of communities. Regardless

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of whether they were capable of realizing it, apes that had whatever behavior and/or morphology that would enable or cause them to dissuade other species from migrating into their community site would have a tremendous selective advantage over those that lacked such. The more their behavior dissuaded immigration the greater the selective advantage to their own community and the greater the selective disadvantage to neighboring communities. It is, of course, normal to be hesitant about asserting group selective factors such as those that I have asserted here. But in the context of this scenario this hesitancy is, I contend, completely unwarranted. This contention is based on the group selective implications of the two factors mentioned above, 1) the patchiness of the remaining forested habitat which divided our ancestors up into "communities" between which gene flow (interbreeding) was greatly reduced, and 2) the fact that the grim reaper, seasonal desiccation, focussed on whole communities whose territorial resources at their community sites had become, for whatever reason, depleted. So, the selective realities of our ancestors shifted from those of the chimpanzee lifestyle—focussed only on being successful individuals and members of successful breeding groups (bands, extended family units)—to those of the A'pith lifestyle—focussed on being successful individuals and members of successful breeding groups AND on being members of communities that successfully effect the preservation of resources at their community sites in the face of the onslaught of multi-species immigration to their community sites. It is also important to point out that there is a positive feedback aspect associated with immigration. Specifically this has to do with the herding or grouping instincts of the immigrating species: if one or a few members of an immigrating species is able to infiltrate a community site then the probability is higher that more members of the same species, and/or members of ecologically related species, will follow. When this aspect is considered in conjunction with the fact that this scenario clearly indicates the community as the group entity that is being selected, it is apparent, I contend, that the better a community is at closing the gate of its ecosystem—sealing its borders—the more likely the members of the community will survive the grim reaper of this habitat, seasonal desiccation (the dry season). In the context of these peculiar selective factors, we can start to ask ourselves what other adaptations, in addition to territorial peskiness, would we expect to evolve? This can be more explicitly delineated in the context of what is mentioned in the above paragraph: what additional behaviors or morphologies would cause/enable these chimpanzee-like territorially pesky apes to be better able and/or more inclined to "close the gate" and effectively seal the borders of their community sites? I propose the following: Cooperation (in the context of mob oriented harassing behaviors): The tendency to confront and attempt to prevent immigrating species collectively rather than just individually. This would involve collecting into larger groups from neighboring and other closely situated "properties" (see below) within a community site and confronting immigrating species: throwing rocks, sticks, and generally making a big racket. As I envision it, this would involve the same

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kind of emotion based behaviors that we currently associate with a mob mentality, including sports fanaticism. Communicativeness: The ability to communicate the relative level of threat associated with potential immigrating species so that mobs can form at vulnerable infiltration points quickly and efficiently. This also involves such behaviors as cheering, booing, and other behaviors that would tend to draw attention of other members of a community to such events. Consciousness: Awareness of the meaning of emotional outbursts that they might see or hear in the distance so that one might be excited into being additive to whatever mob oriented activities are taking place in one's vicinity. Awareness of the property of others due to the implications of the, below mentioned, selective benefits of property oriented communal territorialism. Property Oriented Communal Territorialism (rather than just communally oriented territorialism): Property oriented communal territorialism involves a community being comprised of subgroups each of which has its associated property in the context of the larger community site. The reason, I contend, that we would predict property oriented territorialism is because this would, firstly, cause them—by way of their perceived incentive—to spread out to the different infiltration points of the community site so that they will be in position to better effect the collective sealing of the community sites borders. Secondly, property oriented territorialism will give them the perceived incentive to defend "their" property. (Which, as indicated above, could also include calling out to one's neighboring property holders for assistance to effect a mob and/or responding to one's neighbors call for assistance.) The particular group that I envision as the entity that maintains ownership of the different intracommunal "properties" of a community site would be based upon the band or extended family unit, similar in size and composition to that of the bands that extant chimpanzees tend to form. Gamesmanship: I think it's possible that the behavior that is indicated in this hypothesis was to they themselves little more than a game. Those who were passionate about the game achieved the survival of themselves and their whole community (by way of driving off immigrating species). (In other words, we're descended from sports enthusiasts.) Also, this scenario gives us a sense of how and why we evolved to be so controlling of other species. It even suggests how we began to develop our weapon oriented hunting skills and inclination, not to mention our weapon oriented and mob oriented approach to intraspecies conflicts (war). (I can foresee there being "Hunting Hypothesis," variants of this hypothesis.) Additionally, this scenario is the perfect setup for the scenario in my larger hypothesis (which I now realize is much more dependent upon the pre-existence of a community), which better explains the evolution of other hominid traits, such as our political, ideological nature, our attentiveness to dance, art, storytelling, and other artistic, our economic predisposition for trade, our complex and logic oriented languages, and our pursuit of knowledge and truth. However, the beginning of the dynamics in my greater hypothesis (the Intraspecies Capitalism stuff which is very difficult to explain), may have to be pushed forward in time all the

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way up to the transition to homo. But this may be a good thing in that it better coorelates to the growth of brain capacity in the homo lineage (which, as you know, is greatly lacking in the A'pith lineage). Regard to all, Jim

More options Jul 31 2002, 12:39 pm "