

Re: Faster Than A Hyena?

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- *From:* pgarrone@xxxxxxxxxxxx
 - *Date:* Sat, 23 Feb 2008 00:40:54 -0800 (PST)
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On Feb 23, 8:45 am, "Paul Crowley"

<slkwuoiutiuytcu...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

<pgarr...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message

news:d5edbbf3-d62d-4657-a0c3-905c9afd26f6@xx

Luckily, you did not have to compete with lions, hyenas, cheetahs, wild dogs, smilodon, dire wolves, giant carnivorous bears, and all the other predators around with HE.

The point I was making was that it is definitely possible and straightforward for humans to engage in cursorial hunting.

Considering your predators with respect to the emergence of Erectus :

- Dire wolves and giant carnivorous bears were uninvolved, as they are American. (Erectus emerged in Africa)
- the felids such as lions, cheetahs, and *Dionfelis* (rather than smilodon, which again is American) are not cursorial hunters. Lions were not around until 1.5 mya.

Until *Dionfelis* disappeared about 1.5 mya, hyenas made their living scavenging their kills. Erectus had emerged by then.

This leaves the African hunting dog, *Lycaon pictus*. While these are formidable cursorial predators, it is not difficult to envisage *Homo* having advantages such as posture, vision, and intelligence, as well as an alternate food supply when game was sparse.

It takes a certain intelligence to cope with the hunted animal's various strategies. So it's still an option. However any sensible

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person would obviously just lay a trap and save all that unnecessary energy expenditure.

Very likely. So why all the supposed selection for speed and endurance?

A cursorial hunter needs to eventually run down it's prey, as well as out-think it, so both endurance and intelligence are required.

As to why the A'piths went extinct? Leakey says they were under pressure from Homo on one side

Homo were in a different habitat -- according to you and to standard PA.

What different habitat?

and Baboons on the other.

They'd been competing with baboons from day 1. Why evolve at all if they did not have some distinct advantages? Baboons will always survive in dense jungle (where no one maintains hominds lived). Apiths must have had some edge in more open habitat.

"We know that Homo Erectus was an extremely successful species, since it was the first human to expand its range beyond Africa. It is therefore likely that early Homo grew rapidly in numbers, thus becoming a significant competitor for a resource essential to Australopithecine survival: food. Moreover between 1 and 2 million years ago ground-living monkeys – the baboons – were also becoming highly successful and burgeoning in numbers, and would have competed with Australopithecines for food. The Australopithecines might well have succumbed to a twofold competitive pressure– from homo on one side and baboons on the other."

Leakey 1994 "The origin of Humankind" p 58

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It seems unlikely that "baboons were there from day 1" as you say. However I do tend to disagree with Leakey in the sense that the biggest enemies of the A'piths would have been Homo, rather than baboons, because only robust A'piths evolved after Homo appears. As Homo had the speed, endurance, and intelligence, the only A'pith advantage was size and possibly numbers, as breeding an A'pith would have been faster than a Homo. A robust A'pith group would have been a big threat to the gatherers in a Homo band. So I imagine that the Homos would have either dealt with the A'piths if possible, or moved on, and I further imagine that the baboons probably took advantage of the demise of the A'piths.

As to niche swapping, obviously most species occupy quite stable niches, but homo is the "first", so must have transcended a sequence of niches quite rapidly, biologically speaking

A classic cop-out. We can forget all evolutionary theory which applies to every other species, and invoke a set of special ones for our own line.

This is not scientifically respectable (but that is never a concern for standard PA).

There do not seem to be any barriers going from brachiating ape, to a'piths walking on the savanna,

Except that it is manifest fantasy.

to homo habilis
with scavenging and running and stone tools, to erectus with endurance hunting,

More fantasy.

to full language and rationality of homo sapiens.

Language and *some* rationality
indisputably arrived over some period.

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Probably the most difficult step is the evolution of Homo from Apith.
I find the scavenging hypothesis fairly satisfying

Hopeless. A primate does not descend from the trees to start scavenging. There were already many species far better adapted to the purpose. We have no liking for rotten meat; we have a poor sense of smell, we are hopeless in the dark. Normal adults carry a large weight of fat. There is nothing that indicates scavenging.

as if fills the criteria of small gradual steps,

Gradual steps? Nonsense. The adaptation to cope with rotten meat is huge. All cats are carnivores, but none will touch rotten meat — even though they must encounter it all the time. Much the same applies to carnivorous birds. Only those with special adaptations (e.g. vultures) will eat rotten flesh.

Paul.

Where you accuse me of fantasy, and you do not present any arguments against the scenario's outlined, then you are simply engaging in personal attack, and you make no point at all.

You accuse me of ignoring the rules of evolution, but do not outline which rules are being broken. This unfortunately leaves us as unenlightened as previously.

With respect to the absurdity of primates leaving trees and scavenging, Baboons and chimps hunt, and all hunters scavenge when they can and hunt when they must.

You say scavenging is impossible because homo cannot eat rotten meat. Yet it is possible to scavenge meat that is not yet rotten, most likely by stealing a kill. You just have to be smart, and quick.

"We are hopeless in the dark". No one is claiming Homo was a nocturnal ambush predator.

I am growing tired of your ad-hominem, your mindless and un-sustained

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accusations of fantasy and ignorance, when you make such stupid mistakes as inferring american predators such as smiledon, giant bears, and dire wolves, would interfere with the emergence of Erectus.

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