

## Re: Van Valen's MAXIMAND

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  - *Date:* Thu, 19 May 2005 00:17:35 -0400 (EDT)
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John Edser <[edser@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:edser@xxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote or quoted:

> Tim Tyler [tim@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:tim@xxxxxxxxxxxx) wrote:

> Subject: Re: Van Valen's MAXIMAND

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>>> JE:--

>>> In order to measure any relative fitness, i.e. any fitness  
>>> difference you must (at the very least) have two fitness totals/sub  
>>> totals to compare. In order to have these you have to define a  
>>> minimum of two independent selectee's each of which has been  
>>> allocated one total/subtotal fitness. What are your two independent  
>>> selectee's and what are their total/sub total fitnesses using the  
>>> metric you have proposed? If the fitness totals are only sub totals  
>>> then their comparison will not be definitive for any natural  
>>> selective result.

>

>> TT:--

>> E.g. biomass of species 1 and biomass of species 2.

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> JE:--

> Does this mean that you are comparing the "biomass of species 1 and  
> biomass of species 2" in order to determine which species is selected  
> for and which is selected against? If so: please more exactly define the  
> two selectee's

That would be the members of species 1 and species 2 at a point in time.

> and then define the units of fitness that can be calculated for each of  
> them.

That would be grams.

> You must state if each compared biomass is a total or just a subtotal  
> for each selectee you have defined.

It's not clear how one would one distinguish between a total and a  
subtotal in this context.

>>> JE:--

Re: Van Valen's MAXIMAND

>>> Success at what?

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>> TT:-

>> Becoming an ancestor.

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> JE:-

> Do you argue that "becoming an ancestor" was causative to evolution or

> was it just the result of another (unnamed) cause? If "neither" please

> explain your position.

Becoming an ancestor can cause future evolutionary events, and can be the result of another cause, though probably not "just" the result of another cause – depending on what that is supposed to mean.

>>> JE:-

>>> Why didn't you answer/criticise the question?

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>> TT:-

>> The question was about what I was saying. In my answer I explained

>> what I meant. I don't think entities with more biomass will always

>> win out – but I do think biomass may well be a better guide to success

>> than counting individuals is.

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> JE:-

> Yes, but within the