

Re: Fossil Records Show Biodiversity Comes and Goes

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.geo.geology/2005-03/2002.html>

From: John Harshman (jharshman.diespamdie_at_pacbell.net)

Date: 03/17/05

Date: Thu, 17 Mar 2005 20:40:49 GMT

George wrote:

> "John Harshman" <jharshman.diespamdie@pacbell.net> wrote in message
> news:EXi_d.11423\$C47.2009@newssvr14.news.prodigy.com...

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>>George wrote:

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>>>"John Harshman" <jharshman.diespamdie@pacbell.net> wrote in message

>>>news:mth_d.19662\$Pz7.18926@newssvr13.news.prodigy.com...

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>>>>George wrote:

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>>>>>"John Harshman" <jharshman.diespamdie@pacbell.net> wrote in message

>>>>>news:5Ag_d.11369\$C47.6810@newssvr14.news.prodigy.com...

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>>>>>>George wrote:

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>>>>>>>"John Harshman" <jharshman.diespamdie@pacbell.net> wrote in message

>>>>>>>news:Gi9_d.11294\$C47.107@newssvr14.news.prodigy.com...

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>>>>>>>>George wrote:

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>>>>>>>>>"John Harshman" <jharshman.diespamdie@pacbell.net> wrote in message
>>>>>>>>>news:dR7_d.23874\$OU1.9879@newssvr21.news.prodigy.com...
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>>>>>>>>>>George wrote:
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>>>>>>>>>>>"John Harshman" <jharshman.diespamdie@pacbell.net> wrote in message
>>>>>>>>>>>news:Ri7_d.19550\$Pz7.12327@newssvr13.news.prodigy.com...
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>>>>>>>>>>>>>George wrote:
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>>>>>>>>>>>>>>Such as?
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>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>Such as many of the obsessions of sci.bio.paleontology, to pick one
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>simple area. Are birds dinosaurs? How did feathers evolve? How did
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>endothermy evolve in archosaurs? Is Cope's Rule a real phenomenon,
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>and
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>if so what causes it? Do birds have manal digits 1-2-3 or 2-3-4? For
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>other questions, stratigraphy combined with phylogeny can be helpful:
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>when did birds arise? Did birds suffer a mass extinction at the K-T
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>boundary? Did the radiation of Neornithes happen before or after the
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>K-T
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>extinction? Check out any issue of the various journal's I've
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>mentioned
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>for more.
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>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>Actually, I think examining the rock record, and the fossils they
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>contain
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>can
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>be

sci.geo.geology: Re: Fossil Records Show Biodiversity Comes and Goes

>>>>>> *from paleoecology or stratigraphy. You're the person trying to limit the*
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>>>>>> *field here, to a little area centered around you. People who don't do*
>>>>>> *what you do aren't paleontologists; questions you don't ask aren't*
>>>>>> *paleontology questions.*
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>>>>>> *I agree that taxonomy and anatomy are just tools that paleontologists and*
>>>>>> *biologists use.*
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>>>>>> *And so is study of paleoenvironments, right?*
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>>>>>> *Actually, paleoenvironments are more of a product than a tool. They are what*
>>>>>> *is*
>>>>>> *produced from using all of the tools (like taxonomy and systematics, among*
>>>>>> *many*
>>>>>> *others) available to paleontologists.*
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>>>>>> *You persist in thinking you are the center of the universe (when it's*
>>>>>> *actually me).*
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>>>>>> *Me? No. Why would I want to be the center of the universe? I couldn't handle*
>>>>>> *the responsibility.*
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>>>>>> *You think of paleoecology as the central nexus of*
>>>>>> *paleontology. From your standpoint, systematics is a tool, and*
>>>>>> *paleoenvironments the product.*
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>>>>>> *One product, but a very important product.*

Important to you. I find other products just as important, if not more so.

>>>>>> *From my standpoint (and that of any*
>>>>>> *paleontologist whose work is largely phylogenetic in scope), phylogeny*
>>>>>> *is a product, and paleoenvironments are a tool, though not one that*
>>>>>> *contributes significantly to phylogeny. All this depends on where you*
>>>>>> *stand. And you are not in a privileged reference frame.*
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>>>>>> *Well, I'm not the strictest of Linnaeus "geeks". I find it has it's uses, but I*
>>>>>> *think lists of species are very limited in what they can tell you relative to*
>>>>>> *what an entire ecosystem can tell you about life on earth, whether it be in the*
>>>>>> *past or the present. We've been producing lists and descriptions of species*
>>>>>> *since Linnaeus was an old geezer.*

Are you doing this on purpose to annoy me? Once again you equate systematics with species descriptions and species lists, which is only a

sci.geo.geology: Re: Fossil Records Show Biodiversity Comes and Goes

small part of what systematists do. If it's not on purpose, then you have some kind of psychological block against understanding systematics.

> *We have been describing paleoecology for how*
> *long? A few decades? There is so much more that we don't understand about them*
> *and we've got a lot of catching up to do to make up for the many years these*
> *studies weren't done simply because the science wasn't advanced enough for us to*
> *do them. Sorry, that is simply my opinion, and I think the opinion of others as*
> *well. Nothing personal.*

>

And nothing relevant either.