“Blindingly fast” SNAKE EVOLUTION?

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THE “HISTORIC and prolonged” 2010 cold snap in the USA’s southeast reached as far down as normally balmy southern Florida. The iconic images generated included stiff, immobilized iguanas dropping out of trees.

This big freeze killed many of the state’s cold-intolerant inhabitants. These included large numbers of the invasive Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*). However, by 2015, the pythons had recovered their pre-freeze population levels.

Research published in 2018 found that they now had greater cold tolerance, and researchers identified genes that would help. A popular science article sensationalized this as an amazingly fast example of “Darwinian evolution”, referring to the cold adaptation as “created” by the cold snap.[1] And it sarcastically said that despite the 40% of Americans who did not believe in evolution, the surviving pythons “believe in it 100%”. Thus the conclusion: obviously, “evolution is real”.

Not surprisingly, closer reading of the article showed this to be quite misleading. Modern Darwinism claims that adaptive genes came about by lucky genetic accidents (mutations). In this case, it was clear that these genes were *already present* in a small proportion of the pythons at the time of the freeze. They were the ones that survived to pass on their already-existing genes, which now help the python to expand its range.

Common sense shows that this sort of outcome of natural selection (NS) can happen “in a heartbeat”. Actually, NS was common knowledge among pre-Darwinian creationist biologists. Indeed, the biblical Creation/Fall/Flood/dispersion model relies on NS to facilitate *rapid* adaptation/diversification, even the emergence of new species, from the Ark ‘kinds’. In fact, the faster the better.[2] But this change would have been based almost entirely on their built-in genetic variation (*heterozygosity*)—which is not the same as the (neo) Darwinian evolution allegedly responsible for all life on Earth.

A Darwinian history of life has gene pools *expanding* greatly over time, as more and more novel structures and functions are *gained*. The python example shows, instead, a *contraction*—a *loss* of some of the variety that such adaptive change relies on. In the article’s own wording, the freeze “culled out individuals that were susceptible to cold temperatures”. That’s what NS does; it gets rid of ‘less fit’ genes.

So, creationist researchers are delighted (but definitely not surprised) to see this straightforward case of adaptation by NS.

References and notes

1. Hall, S., ‘An up-tempo version of Darwinian evolution’: How a mega freeze in Florida may have caused Burmese pythons to evolve at a blindingly fast speed, livescience.com, 23 Apr 2025.
2. Wieland, C. and Catchpoole, D., Speedy species surprise, *Creation* **23**(2):13–15, 2001; creation.com/speedy.

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