

Creation Science Rebuttals – Trying to "Evolve" a Fly

by [Greg Neyman](#)

© 2006, Old Earth Ministries

First Published 26 January 2007

Answers In Creation website

Young earth creation science ministry [Answers in Genesis](#) ran an article in their Creation Magazine titled Too Dry for a Fly.¹ This article was also featured on the Creation Ministries website on 8 January 2007. It told the story of how scientists had taken a fly from the Australian rainforest, the *Drosophila birchii*, and selectively bred it to see if it could adapt to a drier environment. The selective process was completed for 30 cycles over 50 fly generations, and to their surprise, the fly did not develop any increase in adaptability to more arid conditions.

Young earth author [David Catchpoole](#) sees this as evidence against evolution. Since the scientists could add no new genetic information, the adaptation failed. This is essentially correct, and there are no problems here from an old earth, or theistic evolution perspective. The fly, over the time span, had adapted to the humid conditions in the rainforest, and had lost its ability to adapt to more arid conditions. As Catchpoole states, the specialization of this fly resulted in the permanent loss of genetic information.

The author notes that other *Drosophila* flies from less humid regions still contain the ability to adapt to drier environments. Catchpoole summarizes that what the scientists observed was not evolution, but merely natural selection. I agree with this observation. But although the scientists were not successful, this does nothing to disprove evolution. Evolution of a species is directly tied to its [mutation rate](#). As mutations occur, they are

incorporated into subsequent generations, which can eventually lead to evolutionary change.

In this study, there was a total of 50 fly generations. Research on mutation rates yields varying results. Some studies show that you should expect one mutation for every 600 generations, while others show a frequency of one mutation every 40 generations. Even at the fastest rate, only one mutation would have occurred in the flies, which obviously would not have produced any changes. Thus, this experiment did nothing to impact the theory of evolution. Christians who believe in theistic evolution have nothing to worry about.

¹ Creation Magazine, Volume 28, Issue 1. Published on the web at

<http://www.creationontheweb.com/content/view/4717/>