



The yearlong celebration of science continues...

EVOLUTION: The YoS2009 February Theme



Image from Science@Cal web site (<http://scienceatcal.berkeley.edu/>)

Evolutionary theory overarches and underlies the modern, scientific understanding of all biology—from ancient fossils, to microscopic bacteria, to human disease, to rain forest ecology. Perhaps no other ideas have so profoundly impacted our views of the living world as the core evolutionary concepts of common ancestry and natural selection.

Evolution not only allows us to understand and appreciate the history and fantastic biodiversity of life, it helps solve biological problems that

“Charles Darwin’s concept of evolution through natural selection is one of the most illuminating scientific ideas of all time for understanding our biosphere and humanity’s place in nature. As an iconic figure, Darwin is matched only by Newton and Einstein – indeed, he has perhaps had a more pervasive influence on human culture than any other scientist.”

-- Lord Rees of Ludlow,
Charles Darwin Trust’s Science Advisory Panel

impact our lives. Thanks to evolutionary theory, we can build better vaccines, improve our control of crop pests, make informed decisions regarding conservation, and much more! Computer scientists have used evolutionary algorithms to solve computational problems.

Engineers have used principles of evolution to develop more efficient robots. Law enforcement agencies depend on DNA analyses that wouldn’t be possible without knowledge of evolutionary theory. When you look for it, evolution is everywhere!

Evolution and its influence are certainly worthy of a celebration, and what better month to celebrate than February 2009, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin!

Though Charles Darwin is the historical figure most closely associated with evolution, his ideas built upon previous biological and geological knowledge. In the same way, modern evolutionary biologists continue to build upon the ideas of Darwin and his contemporaries. New tools and technologies allow us to answer questions about the natural world that would not have been out of reach in Darwin’s time!

To learn more about evolution, visit Understanding Evolution at: <http://evolution.berkeley.edu>

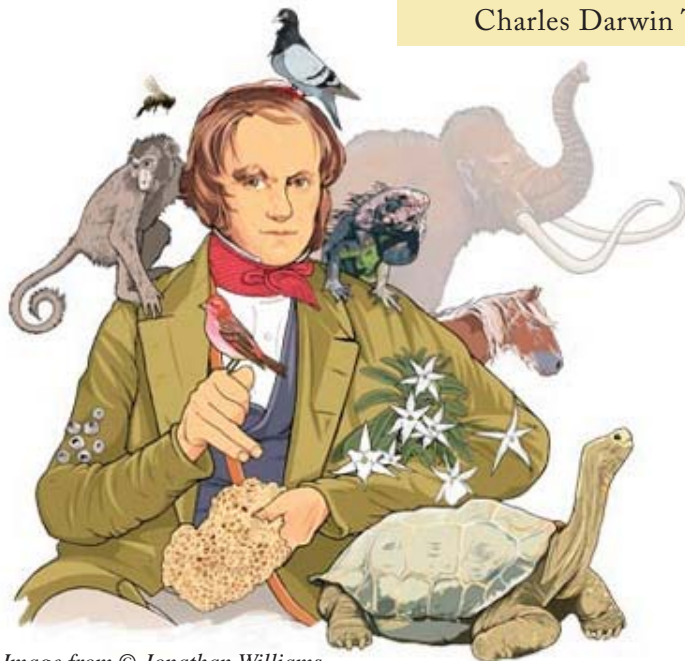


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