## **Pigeon DNA Proves Darwin Right**

Written by Administrator Thursday, 21 February 2013 05:57 -

"Pigeon DNA proves Darwin right" claims Nature News 31 January 2013 in a genetic study of pigeon breeds also reported in ScienceNOW 31 January 2013. Charles Darwin spent many years breeding many varieties of pigeons, and wrote about them in *Origin of Species*. According to Nathan Young, an evolutionary biologist at the University of California, San Francisco, "The domesticated pigeon was just as, if not more, important (as Darwin's finches) to the evolution of his thinking about how natural selection worked". Darwin suggested that the different varieties of domesticated pigeons were descended from the wild rock dove, *Columba livia* 

, also known as rock pigeons. A team of scientists has now compared the genomes of 36 domestic breeds of pigeon and two feral breeds, and, according to Michael Shapiro of University of Utah, the research "puts data behind that argument".

The researchers also studied one of the most distinctive features of many domestic breeds — the presence or absence of a head crest. The head crest is formed when feathers grow upwards, rather than down along the body — a condition described as "reverse polarity of feather follicles". The researchers found a difference of one base (item of DNA information) in a gene named EphB2. According to ScienceNOW, "The single base change involved causes the protein to have a different amino acid at a crucial spot, one that likely renders the protein ineffective". Shapiro's team are also looking for the genetic variations that produce other distinctive features of the different breeds, such as beak shape, size, colour and whether they roll or tumble as they fly.

## **Nature News**

**Editorial Comment**: Darwin admitted he was not the first person to claim that the varieties of domestic pigeons were all related to the rock pigeon. He wrote:

"Great as the differences are between the breeds of pigeons, I am fully convinced that the common opinion of naturalists is correct, namely, that all have descended from the rock-pigeon (Columba livia), including under this term several geographical races or sub-species, which differ from each other in the most trifling respects". (Darwin, 1859, Origin of Species, p23)

If this idea was already believed before Darwin's book was published, then it wasn't derived from evolutionary theory, since the world he lived in was basically creationist. So a little more objective look at the current study shows that the variation in domestic and wild pigeons is actually variation within a kind, and fits with Genesis, which tells us that God created birds as separate kinds. All breeding experiments with pigeons, including Darwin's, have not changed

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pigeons into non-pigeons. They have simply revealed the variation within the pigeon kind.

The suggestion that the head crest gene causes a protein to be rendered ineffective, is a reminder that what can often be claimed to be a newly evolved feature is actually a degeneration, and merely produces variation in an already existing trait, in this case feather growth. This also fits Genesis, which tells us the world has degenerated from its original created good state. Since evolution is actually about how pigeons are descended from non-pigeons, which prior to that used to be reptiles, which were ultimately derived from non-living chemicals, the current research does nothing to support this claim. (Ref. birds, ornithology, genetics)

Evidence News 21 February 2013