## **Backwards Backbone**

Written by Administrator Tuesday, 19 March 2013 10:33 -

Backwards backbone reported in BBC News 14 Jane 2013, ABC News in Science 15 January 2013 and *Nature*, vol. 494, 226 doi:10.1038/nature11825 14 January 2013. A new study using high energy x-rays of the spine of a fossil creature name *Ichthyostega* has revealed that previous reconstructions of the animal's spine got it back to front. Stephanie Pierce, of the University of Cambridge's Department of Zoology explained: "For more than 100 years, early tetrapods were thought to have vertebrae composed of three sets of bones — one bone in front, one on top, and a pair behind. But, by peering inside the fossils using synchrotron x-rays, we have discovered that this traditional view literally got it back-to-front". The scientists also discovered the creature had a string of bone in the middle of the front of the chest forming a structure like a sternum (breastbone) which would have reinforced the ribcage.

The x-ray study enabled scientists to reconstruct the bones in three dimensions, and then use this to work out how the creature moved. Pierce explained: "By understanding how each of the bones fit together we can begin to explore the mobility of the spine and test how it may have transferred forces between the limbs during the early stages of land movement". *Ichthyostega* is considered to be a transitional form between water dwelling and land dwelling animals. John Hutchinson of the Royal Veterinary College commented: "All of that anatomy [from these early land animals] was handed down to later animals. It influenced the future evolution of the spine in everything on land. It tells us about our own development and why our own backbones developed the way they did". The research team suggest that *Ichthyostega* 

moved on land something like a seal, supported on its forelimbs.

ABC, BBC

**Editorial Comment**: In 2005 scientists studying the *Ichthyostega* spine concluded it could only move in a "desperately awkward" fashion like an inchworm, and therefore it died out when amphibians developed a more efficient way of moving on land and out-competed the struggling *Ichthyostega* 

. One palaeontologist took out his frustration with creationists when he commented "It's not a very intelligent design". (Science Shots 1 September 2005) However as this new study suggests, if it could move about like a seal, then the way it moved on land can't have been the cause of its demise. After all, seals are still here.

This new study is a good example of how creation-based thinking is a better basis for scientific investigation than evolution. Instead of scornfully dismissing this animal's spine as "not a very

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intelligent design", a creation basis says here is something that looks odd, but it must have started very good (Genesis 1:31) and may have degenerated, therefore, we should do more research and find out how it worked. That may mean waiting for better technology, as in the high energy x-rays used on this fossil. The contrary evolutionary basis assumes that living things evolved by chance random processes, therefore lots of half-baked, badly functioning animals have been produced, then been eliminated in the struggle for life, so poor backwards *Ic hthyostega* 

was just another evolutionary dropout. The new research is a good example of investigation carried out in spite of the theory of evolution, not because of it, so we make the claim again that evolution is no use to scientific research and should be abandoned. (Ref. vertebrates, locomotion, amphibians)

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