Oldest Ear Fossils

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Oldest ear fossils found, according to ScienceNOW and PLoS One 12 Sep 2007. For animals that live on land to hear, they must convert vibrations in air into vibrations in fluid. In living animals this is done by the eardrum and middle ear bones. Johannes Muller and Linda Tsuji of Humboldt University, Berlin have studied some fossil reptiles found in the Mezen River Basin in central Russia, dated as 260 million years old. This is 60 million years before the earliest land animals with ears were believed to have evolved. The researchers claim the Russian fossils showed clear evidence of having had an eardrum. Some also have a bone similar to the stapes (a bone used to transmit vibrations from the eardrum to the inner ear of modern terrestrial vertebrates) and "a braincase specialized in showing modifications clearly related to an increase in auditory function, unlike the braincase of other Paleozoic tetrapod."

Ears are believed to have evolved separately at least six times in land dwelling animals, i.e. in frogs, lizards, crocodiles, turtles, mammals and birds. Palaeontologists are not sure why ears evolved. The most recent suggestion is from Jennifer Clack of Cambridge University who proposed that hearing evolved so reptiles could hear buzzing insects, but buzzing insects are not believed to have evolved 260 million years ago. Muller and Tsuji suggest that ears evolved so that reptiles could live in dimly lit places.

PLoS One

Editorial Comment: Ears may be useful for hearing buzzing insects and/or for surviving in dimly lit environments, but that does not explain where genes for forming ears came from, and it certainly doesn't explain how such a complex structure as an ear could evolve naturalistically, randomly or by chance at least six separate times. This is yet another example of evolutionists confusing a story about the evidence with what the evidence actually shows. (Ref. teleogy, purpose, design)

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