As a contribution to the 2009 Charles Darwin anniversary, the website Live Science has a series entitled "Top 10 Useless Limbs (and Other Vestigial Organs)" which it introduces as follows: "In Charles Darwin's On the Origin of Species (1859) and in his later works, he referred to several "vestiges" in human anatomy that were left over from the course of evolution. These vestigial organs, Darwin argued, are evidence of evolution and represent a function that was once necessary for survival, but over time that function became either diminished or nonexistent. The presence of an organ in one organism that resembles one found in another has led biologists to conclude that these two might have shared a common ancestor. Vestigial organs have demonstrated remarkably how species are related to one another, and has given solid ground for the idea of common descent to stand on. From common descent, it is predicted that organisms should retain these vestigial organs as structural remnants of lost functions. It is only because of macro-evolutionary theory, or evolution that takes place over very long periods of time, that these vestiges appear."
Live Science

In 2008 *New Scientist* published an article entitled "Vestigial organs: Remnants of evolution" which concludes: "Whether we are talking about useless vestiges or anatomical structures that have taken on a new lease of life, however, it is hard to ignore the evidence that human beings are walking records of their evolutionary past." *New Scientist*, 17 May 2008, pp42-45.

Editorial Comment: In response to readers' questions and claims like those on Live Science and *New Scientist*, we have written an article on some commonly claimed human and non-human vestigial organs. PDF here .
As an introduction, here are some definitions and comments.

Definitions

Vestigial: (of an organ or part of the body) degenerate, rudimentary, or atrophied, having lost its function in the course of evolution.
Compact Oxford English Dictionary

Vestigial Organ:: An organ that is functionless and generally reduced in size, but bears some resemblance to the corresponding fully functioning organs found in related organisms"

Dictionary of Biology, Intercontinental Book Productions, p198

Editorial Comment: Most of what evolutionists have called vestigial organs that have supposedly lost their function, the classic example being the appendix, have turned out to be fully functional, and hence no use to the case for evolution. At the opposite end, in spite of what is presented in many creationist writings and websites, there are partly or fully vestigial organs, i.e. body structures that are at present defective in structure or function such as the world's only nocturnal ground dwelling flightless parrots in New Zealand. But in every case they turn out to be evidence of change, but not of evolution. The change involved is always degenerate, i.e. the opposite of evolution.

Any real or partial vestigial organ is a reminder that the real history of the world is Descent with Modification from an initial created perfection. It was followed by the degeneration caused by the fall of Man which bought about God's cursing of the ground, and the later judgement of Noah's Flood. This caused massive degradation of the environment, and was followed by genetic isolation and resultant inbreeding amongst all living groups (man included) as they spread out across the globe after the flood. This in turn has resulted in a great increase in genetic defects and loss of function.

Creationist Challenge: The fact that some degenerate organs have some remaining function brings to light a gap in scientific nomenclature which needs to be resolved. It is worth pondering the option that some organs originally had more than one function, and can actually survive considerable loss of function, while continuing to exist with much reduced functional roles. An example is the present day dwarf legs in many reptiles, whose fossils show they once had full legs. Such degenerate organs are no longer any use in walking, but are still large enough to hold on to a female in mating.

Such organs cannot be considered totally vestigial till all function has been lost, so we propose a new term be created to describe we recommend such functionally reduced organs be labelled as ***dystrophic*** which we define as *an originally multifunctional appendage or organ which has lost some of its original function or functions, but has not yet become non-functional*. We use the word dystrophic in the same way it is used to describe disease processes involving lost or diminished function, e.g. as in the disease muscular dystrophy, a degenerative disease that causes loss of function in muscles because one structural protein is missing.

Creation Research prediction: many organs will be found to have been multiple functions, as

well as having backup (via what are commonly viewed as redundant support) systems, and thus, are capable of considerable loss of function before becoming useless and a detriment to the creature.

Evidence News, 7 October 2009