

## Cuddly Cold-Cures Counter Critics

Opponents of biblical creation have often used the koala as an example of an animal whose diet, they say, is too specialised for it to have been able to migrate from Ararat to south-eastern Australia.

They point out that koalas would have had to migrate across vast tracts of land which contain no eucalyptus (gum) trees. Koalas live exclusively on a diet of such leaves, so they could not survive the journey.

The response to such criticisms has centered around two factors, but now there is additional important information strengthening the creationist answer. First, the two existing points:—

- (1) Vegetation in an area can change very rapidly as weather conditions do. After the Flood and the associated glacial/pluvial age, there would have been massive shifts in rainfall patterns for hundreds of years.<sup>1,2</sup> There is no way of knowing for sure which trees grew where in the early post-Flood centuries, but there have been great changes. For instance, there is evidence that huge forests once covered areas which are now dry and barren. Thus there may have been eucalyptus trees growing all along the route of migration.
- (2) The koala's ancestor was probably far less specialized than the more 'devolved' modern-day variety. An analogy would be the way in which modern-day breeds of pet animals often require far more finicky conditions than their hardier 'wild type' ancestors. Specialization under selection pressure involves daughter populations which carry only a portion of the information of the parent populations. Just because today's koalas only live on gum leaves doesn't mean that their ancestors didn't enjoy a much broader range of food.  
In addition:—
- (3) It now looks as if the koala's well-known exclusive diet of gum leaves is really a behavioural addiction, rather than a genetic inability to eat



or digest other types of food.

It certainly seems true that koalas reared in the wild will feed exclusively on eucalyptus leaves and die without them. Their bodies become literally saturated with the pungent eucalyptus oils until they smell like furry cough sweets.<sup>3</sup>

But according to Ronald Siegel, a psychopharmacologist at UCLA, this dependence on these intoxicating sub-

stances is learnt in early infancy; the baby koala literally becomes 'hooked' through its mother's eucalyptus-flavoured milk. Yet orphan koalas reared away from any contact with these substances 'can thrive on a diet of cow's milk, bread and honey.'<sup>4</sup>

Koalas may have only become addicted to an exclusive gum-leaf diet in this way well after arriving in Australia.

### REFERENCES

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2. Austin, S. A., Baumgardner, J. R., Humphreys, D. R., Snelling, A. A., Vardiman, L. and Wise, K. P., 1994. Catastrophic plate tectonics: a global Flood model of earth history. *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Creationism*, Creation Science Fellowship, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in press.
3. Spinney, L., 1994. Animals seeking oblivion. *New Scientist*, 143(1945):29.
4. Spinney, Ref. 3.

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## Modern Fungus in the Devonian!

Fossil fungi with morphology very similar to *Allomyces*, a species popular for experimentation, have been found on plants from the early Devonian period.<sup>1</sup> These fossils are supposed to be 400 million years old, according to evolutionary assumptions. The researchers made detailed studies of the morphology. The fossil fungus life cycle was quite complex, with two distinctive types of reproductive structures, each producing two different types of spores. This life cycle is quite unusual in living fungi, such that there is little doubt that the fossil fungus is almost identical to the living fungus *Allomyces* subgenus *Euallomyces*. The authors said,

'... the presence of this fungus

by early Devonian time... demonstrates that thallus morphology and reproductive systems in some terrestrial fungi were established very early and apparently have changed little since then.'

This is yet another example of the extreme stasis of living things. How many generations would this fungus have been through in 400 million years, and yet it has not evolved (changed)?

### REFERENCE

1. Taylor, T. N., Remy, W. and Hass, H., 1994. *Allomyces* in the Devonian. *Nature*, 367:601.

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