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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Pokémon Analogy and the Ordering of the Fossil Record: A Preliminary Creationist Model

No Rabbits in the Cambrian? A Creationist Answer with a Pokémon Twist

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Abstract

One of the strongest objections to the biblical creation and global Flood model is the apparent order of the fossil record. Evolutionists claim that the sequence of fossils—from Cambrian "simple" organisms to mammals and humans—represents millions of years of evolutionary progression. Critics ask: Why don't we find a rabbit in the Cambrian, or humans buried with dinosaurs?

Creationists have long noted that ecological zonation could help explain the order of fossils, but this article advances the discussion by reframing it in terms of regional communities. Drawing from the world of Pokémon, where creatures are grouped into distinct regions, this model suggests that the pre-Flood world may likewise have been divided into distinct regional zones of life. Though contemporaneous, these regions were sequentially buried during the Flood, producing the appearance of evolutionary succession. By reframing the fossil record as regional burial rather than evolutionary history, this model offers a new way to address objections and opens avenues for future creationist research.

Introduction

One of the most common objections critics raise against the biblical creation and global Flood model concerns the ordering of the fossil record. The argument goes: if a worldwide Flood truly occurred, we should expect the fossils to be hopelessly "mixed up." Yet, instead, the geologic column appears neatly ordered—from "simple" organisms in the Cambrian, to fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and finally humans. As skeptics like Stephen Jay Gould famously asked, "Why don't we find a rabbit in the Cambrian?" (Gould, 1980).

In other words, why don't we find humans buried with dinosaurs, or therapsids buried with modern mammals? Evolutionists argue that this order reflects millions of years of evolutionary progression. But is this the only explanation? Or can the order be understood in a creationist framework consistent with a global Flood?

While creationists have long recognized that ecological zonations could play a role, this article proposes a broader and more clarifying framework: regional burial zones. By drawing on one of the most popular cultural phenomena of the last three decades—the world of Pokémon—this preliminary model illustrates how distinct **regional zones** in the pre-Flood world may account for the patterns we see in the fossil record today.

To see how this analogy works, we can begin by looking at the structure of the Pokémon world itself, where creatures are organized into distinct regions with unique distributions—an arrangement that mirrors how the pre-Flood Earth may have been divided into regional zones of biodiversity.

The World of Regions

In Pokémon, the world is divided into distinct regions: Kanto, Johto, Hoenn, Sinnoh, Unova, Kalos, Galar, and Paldea, among others. Each region has its own unique distribution of creatures. For example:

- Kanto: Pokémon like Bulbasaur, Charmander, and Squirtle are introduced here.
- Johto: New Pokémon such as Chikorita, Cyndaquil, and Totodile first appear.
- Hoenn: Torchic, Mudkip, and Treecko belong here.
- Sinnoh: Introduces Turtwig, Chimchar, and Piplup.

Although all these creatures exist in the same world, they are not evenly distributed. A Charizard (Kanto) and a Typhlosion (Johto) coexist in time but not necessarily in space—they belong to different regions.

This provides a powerful analogy for the pre-Flood world. The Earth before the Flood may have resembled a massive supercontinent (Snelling, 2009), subdivided into distinct ecological regions. Each region hosted unique communities of plants and animals, just as each Pokémon region hosts its own unique creatures.

Reinterpreting the Fossil Record

From this perspective, the fossil record does not represent evolutionary succession through deep time, but rather regional burial order during the Flood. As Flood waters advanced across the continents, they buried ecosystems in sequence:

- The Cambrian through Devonian layers represent vast marine ecosystems.
- The Mesozoic layers represent reptile- and dinosaur-dominated regions.
- The lower portions of the Cenozoic likely reflect late-Flood deposits dominated by mammals, while much of the upper Cenozoic (including Ice Age and human-dominated layers) represent post-Flood deposits. This view is consistent with models such as Mike Oard's, which place the Flood/post-Flood boundary in the Late Cenozoic (Oard, 2008; Oard, 2014).

Just as Pokémon from Johto are not found in Kanto, humans in one pre-Flood region would not necessarily be buried with dinosaurs from another region. The fossil record is therefore not a timeline of evolution, but a map of pre-Flood regional biotas sequentially buried in a global catastrophe, with later post-Flood deposits contributing to the picture.

Living Fossils and the Coelacanth Problem

Another challenge to evolutionary reasoning comes from "living fossils." The Coelacanth was long thought to have gone extinct ~65 million years ago, with its first fossils dating back ~300 million years. Yet living Coelacanths were rediscovered in 1938 off the coast of South Africa (Forey, 1998).

Here's the puzzle: why are Coelacanths not found fossilized alongside whales, dolphins, or humans if they supposedly lived together for tens of millions of years? Evolutionists often reply

that different ecological niches prevented co-burial. But this is the same logic they deny creationists when asked why humans and dinosaurs are not buried together.

In both cases, the explanation is regional separation. Just as whales and Coelacanths today occupy different marine zones, humans and dinosaurs could have lived in different regions of the pre-Flood world.

From Vertical Ages to Horizontal Regions

The Pokémon analogy allows us to reframe the fossil record as regions, not ages. Imagine turning the geologic column sideways: what appears as a vertical progression—from Cambrian "simple" organisms to Quaternary mammals and humans—could instead represent horizontal regions of biodiversity that existed simultaneously. This analogy does not require every layer to be Flood-deposited; much of the late Cenozoic may reflect post-Flood processes, as some creationist models argue.

In this framework:

- Each "layer" of the fossil record reflects the burial of a different pre-Flood **regional community**.
- The Flood sequentially swept across these regions, preserving them in an ordered pattern.
- The appearance of evolutionary succession is therefore an artifact of ecological burial order.

Clarifying the Analogy

This analogy explains why creatures can appear "separated in time" in the fossil record when, in fact, they may have simply been "separated in space." For example, one might mistakenly assume that Charizard (from Kanto) and Typhlosion (from Johto) represent different eras, when

in reality they coexisted simultaneously—just in different regions. Similarly, dinosaurs and humans could have lived at the same time in the pre-Flood world but within separate ecological zones, which explains why their remains are not typically found together.

A common objection asks: why don't we see all flying creatures together, such as birds and pterosaurs? The answer lies in ecological diversity. Each region would have contained a balanced mix of creatures, not just one "category." Birds and pterosaurs, though both capable of flight, could have inhabited different ecosystems—just as Coelacanths and whales both live in water today yet are never found buried together in the fossil record. Likewise, during the Flood, flying creatures would not have survived indefinitely in the air. Like airplanes, they would eventually "land," and where they landed determined where they were buried.

These insights highlight that the fossil record is best understood as the sequential burial of regional communities, not a timeline of evolutionary ages.

Figure 1: Pre-Flood World vs. Pokémon World

Just as the Pokémon world is divided into regions (Kanto, Sinnoh, Unova, Kalos), each with its own unique creatures, the pre-Flood world can be understood as divided into distinct **regional zones** (Cambrian, Devonian, Ordovician, Jurassic). These zones hosted different communities of organisms, which explains why the fossil record shows a recognizable order. The global Flood would have buried these zones in succession, giving the appearance of progression through the geologic column—when in reality, it reflects **regional sorting** rather than evolutionary stages.

Why This Matters

This preliminary model reframes the fossil record objection. The ordering of fossils is not evidence of deep time or large-scale evolution, but instead evidence of ecological regions catastrophically buried during the global Flood.

- Pokémon regions illustrate how creatures can coexist in the same world yet remain separated regionally.
- Living fossils like the Coelacanth highlight the fallacy of assuming non-overlap means non-coexistence.
- Flood geology explains sequential fossilization as a function of ecological burial, not evolutionary transformation.

This idea is not presented as a final word, but as the beginning of an ongoing research project. Just as Pokémon captivates younger generations, this analogy may provide a creative, accessible, and scientifically robust way to engage new audiences in the creation-evolution debate.

Conclusion

Why don't we find a rabbit in the Cambrian? Or humans buried with dinosaurs? The answer may be simpler than evolutionists assume. Like Pokémon regions, the pre-Flood world was divided into ecological zones. These zones were buried sequentially in the year-long global Flood, producing the apparent order of fossils without evolutionary progression.

This preliminary model opens the door for further study, refinement, and testing. It demonstrates that the fossil record challenge is far from fatal to biblical creation—in fact, it can be reinterpreted as powerful support for a Flood-based framework.

Author's Note

This article presents a preliminary model intended to stimulate discussion and further study. Ongoing research will expand and refine these ideas in more technical publications, with the goal of strengthening the creationist understanding of the fossil record.

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