Paleontologists in denial for 50 years. Again.
Aquatic human speciation

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Hair and skin and fat and sweat are not fossilized. So paleoanthropologists, the paleontologists who study ape fossils and write the authoritative textbooks on human evolution, do not want to allow these things in the discussion. It's like the sport of basketball, where ropes and gloves and grease and water are not allowed in the game. If they were allowed, the sport would be so different that today's highly skilled basketball stars could no longer play.

A brilliant hypothesis of human evolution, based on things that cannot be fossilized, was presented by professor Alister Hardy in *New Scientist* in 1960, and condoned by Desmond Morris in *The Naked Ape* in 1967. Despite gaining much scientific support over the years, this hypothesis, known as the "aquatic ape theory" has been flatly rejected by paleontologists. The ridicule and avoidance of this theory in leading textbooks has kept other scientists from knowing about it or developing it.

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As a geologist and science historian, I wish to point out that paleontologists have denied a good theory before. For about 50 years, from 1912 until about 1962, they kept other scientists from developing a brilliant theory of geological evolution, which they mockingly referred to as "continental drift." When they were finally forced to yield, the geological revolution that is now called plate tectonics could begin.

Before we consider the aquatic ape theory in more detail, I want to share a lesson in the history of science, based on my research on the rejection of the continental drift theory. It gives insight into how paleontologists might perpetuate fundamental mistakes in their version of human evolution.

Scientists are only human; sometimes they make serious mistakes. And scientific institutions, such as universities and science publishers, are like other institutions: they want to ignore or downplay mistakes and protect their reputations.

As I taught Introductory Geology year after year, I felt that Alfred Wegener's evidence for continental drift in 1912 was so strong that it was scandalous of science to deny this theory for 50

years. For example, it was known that the coastlines matched on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and the mid-Atlantic ridge matched as well. It was known that plants and animals on both sides of the Atlantic were identical in earlier geologic times, showing that these continents were previously connected. It was known that during these earlier times, glaciers covered continents that are now near the equator, whereas continents that are now at high latitudes were experiencing tropical conditions. How could the theory of continental drift have been rejected and not taken seriously?

Scandals are often associated with coverups. With this in mind, I went looking for coverups, and found them. I discovered that it was one of the world's leading paleontologists that led the campaign against continental drift. His name was Charles Schuchert. He was professor of paleontology at Yale University and the Peabody Museum of Natural History, author of the world's leading textbooks of geology and paleontology, editor of the prestigious *American Journal of Science*, President of the Paleontological Society (1910), and President of the Geological Society of America (1922) He was the world's authority on paleogeography — the study of lands and oceans and fossils in ancient times.

Schuchert blasted Wegener's model, and his colleagues accepted his judgment. He was fluent in German, and in world geology and paleontology. But his hidden motive was this: if continents had drifted from other places, his own paleogeography of fixed continents with postulated land bridges would be discredited. He realized that Wegener's moving continents resolved important paleogeographical problems, but his own textbook claims and the paleo oceans and continents that he had established were more important. He and his textbook coauthors chose to adjust their textbooks to dodge evidence for the theory of continental drift for the next 40 years. Rather than explain the details here, I refer you to my book, which is available for free open access at http://krilldrift.com Now we can get back to the aquatic ape theory.

Fossils are not rare, but mammalian fossils are rare indeed, and fossils of primates — monkeys and apes — are among the rarest. Geological conditions are generally unsuitable for fossilization of mammals. Most of the species of primates that must have lived have probably never left a fossil. Only one fossil from a chimpanzee has ever been discovered: three teeth, described in *Nature* in 2005.

Paleontologists, and especially mammalian paleontologists, are experts in speculation. They need to be. Sometimes only a single tooth of a new, unknown species is discovered. An eager paleontologist might give the new species a latin name and draw the entire animal. They need to know how to make their fossils and fossil interpretations interesting and convincing. They are also experts at ignoring or discrediting the speculations of other paleontologists that would contradict their own.

Although apes are not likely to be preserved as fossils, apes with big brains and skilled hands and stone tools are an exception. They could leave tell-tale traces and might bury their dead. For this reason, ape fossils of *Homo sapiens* and *Homo neanderthalensis* are relatively abundant, with the oldest being about 200,000 years back.

Most of the fossils of apes between 200,000 and 6 million years are only fragments, but they still provide opportunities for experts to play their academic games, as they discuss such things as likely brain size, posture, and habitat, and draw the human ancestors that they want to promote.

There are 25 extant species of apes, including 7 species of great apes. Although we have few fossils of them, we can be sure that there were hundreds, perhaps thousands, of species of apes that are now extinct. Some of the best known names for these various apes are Australopithecus, *Homo habilis*, *Homo erectus*, and Lucy. Some of these ancient extinct apes could walk on two legs, some could use tools, some had slightly larger brains than others. These features do not indicate that they are ancestors of humans. But if they are our ancestors, and not our ape cousins, the paleoprimatologists who play with these fossils are paleoanthropologists, which is what they want to be.

The topic of aquatic ape theory is taboo in most textbooks on evolution, just as continental drift was taboo in most geology textbooks. The idea is mentioned, but mainly to note that it has been considered, and brush it off or ridicule it. In one leading textbook, the idea of evolution from aquatic apes is considered similar to the idea of evolution from ancient astronauts.

As different as they may appear, humans and chimpanzees are genetically so similar that they could be considered the same species. They could likely produce a hybrid offspring, a *humanzee*. It is generally agreed that this would be unethical, and it borders on unethical even to mention the possibility. It is certainly not mentioned in textbooks on human evolution, but you can read about it at https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanzee.

Think about what this genetic similarity implies: some sort of extreme selection pressure must have led humans to evolve extremely different physical characteristics. The most recent common ancestor (MRCA) probably resembled a chimpanzee. A familiar example of such extreme evolution within the same species, are domestic dogs that evolved from a most recent common ancestor that must have resembled the gray wolf, with humans providing the extreme selection pressures.

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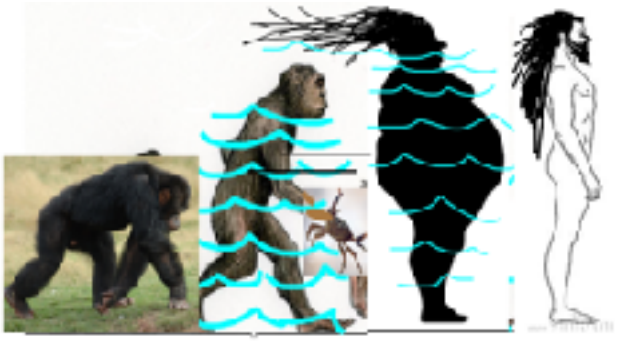
An excellent website on the history and science behind the aquatic ape theory is http://aquatic-human-ancestor.org Here I take the key parts of this theory, and develop them further, in an evolutionary theory that I call *Aquatic Human Speciation*. It provides all the extreme selection pressures that seem to be necessary to explain the evolution of human characteristics from the chimpanzee-like MRCA.

The African continent, ca. 10 million years.



An isolated island, ca. 10 thousand years.

~~Mitochondrial Eve and Y-chromosomal Adam mt-MRCA and Y-MRCA~~