

SWAN Statement on the Teaching of Evolution

Approved by the membership of the Southwestern Association of Naturalists
(SWAN)

at the Annual Meeting at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma, USA
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The Southwestern Association of Naturalists is an international association of scientists, educators, and students that was founded in 1953 to promote the field study of plants and animals in the southwestern United States, Mexico, and Central America. Our members have published well over 50,000 peer-reviewed articles (>5,100 in the journal *The Southwestern Naturalist*) from biological field studies in virtually all habitats in the region as well as numerous laboratory studies. Our observations are only a small fraction of all those that put the scientific credibility of the theory of evolution on a par with the best supported theories in the history of scientific endeavor. Evolution is the unifying concept of all biology, the explanation for the seemingly endless biodiversity of the Earth, and the starting point for understanding agriculture, human and veterinary medicine, paleontology, anthropology, genetics, and perhaps most importantly to our members, ecology and conservation. Therefore, the Southwestern Association of Naturalists declares that:

- It is imperative that evolution is taught in unaltered form in science classes at primary, secondary, and collegiate levels.
- Attempts to introduce creationism, “intelligent design,” or other non-scientific ideas for the origin of biodiversity into public education as scientific alternatives to evolutionary theory must be rejected.
- Efforts to redefine science to include non-scientific concepts must be thwarted.
- Inching in religious beliefs on creation into science classrooms under the guise of “teach the controversy” is not acceptable--there is no controversy about evolution among the vast majority of scientists, and students should not be taught that there is.
- Educators teaching evolution in science classes require, deserve, and must have the outspoken support of the scientific community and education governing bodies.