

ARTICLES

The persistence of ursine defecation patterns in arboreal and sylvan eco-systems: rhetorical artefact or empirically proven?

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The question of the specific nature and site of ursine mammalian excretory processes is one that has exercised the rhetorical skills of homo sapiens sarcasticus for a considerable period of time. Given the frequent reference to this conundrum in demotic speech, it is surprising that this topic of lively debate has not been examined systematically. Paleo-ontological excavation of coprolites would indicate persistence of this behavioural trait through geological epochs. However, no meta-analysis of available scientific studies had been conducted. The authors review the literature and conclude that further well-funded research into this vital issue- alongside the nature of theological orthodoxy in the Vatican's leadership- is required. We offer a short list of suitable recipients of any grants that would be forthcoming.

It is widely believed that the members of the *Ursidae* family, (order Carnivora) have a habit of expelling partially digested organic matter from their anal sphincters that is both frequent and continuous throughout their lifespan (1-4). This feature of the species is widely commented upon in popular culture, and is taken as a heuristic for high order stochastic probability(5).

Notwithstanding coherent (6-8) and not-quite-so-coherent critiques (9-10) of the experimental method and Science with a capital S and a Lab Coat, we felt that the question of ursine defecation in sylvan eco-systems was both a relevant and challenging endeavour. A meta-analysis of the available literature was completed in parallel with a well-rehearsed process involving the transfer of kinetic energy to a volume of dihydrogen oxide (using an old-fashioned bunsen burner) until a phase shift from liquid to gaseous state began to occur, serial addition of an infusion of *Camellia sinensis*, followed sequentially and ultimately by

imbibation of the resulting compound. Although the literature under review was not extensive, it did allow for a repeat of the preceding process.

Field work

In addition to a desk-study, the authors were able to obtain funding for a small amount of fieldwork. This was provided by Berkeley School of Esoteric and Recursive Coursework (BESERC), on the understanding that in addition to the existing study, the authors would examine the question of whether in cases where perennial woody plants with secondary branches supported clear of the ground on a single main stem with clear apical dominance deviate rapidly and fully from a vertical orientation, there is- in the absence of an impartial observer- in fact any dissipation of a proportion of the kinetic energy in the form of sound waves. While it was possible to arrive at a tentative answer, we are unable to publish these results. This is due to an

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unfortunate and unforeseeable accident in which a member of the family *felix Schrodingerus* masticated the manuscript while it was in the domicile of one of the authors, rendering it illegible.

Conclusions

It is clear from the paucity of research into this area that;

- a) scientists generally have better things to do with their time than study the blindingly obvious, though there are exceptions to this rule (11-12)
- b) despite the critiques offered of bureaucracy by right-wing-nuts who oppose all welfare spending while generally applauding warfare spending, bureaucracies are not mindlessly expansive and constantly seeking out arcane and irrelevant topics of study. Nor are scientists part of a global conspiracy- along with governments, capitalists and environmentalists- to screw the taxpayer by lying about climate change. Just because you don't want something to be true, doesn't mean it isn't. There is actually a world independent of your stupid fantasies of limitless growth and free lunches.
- c) That said, grants are fun.

d) er, that's it.

However, it must be remembered that evolution (13) is a process that is open-ended and non-teleological (14-15). Given dangerous anthropogenic interference in the Earth System (16-17), alongside increasing rates of deforestation, the persistence of ursine defecation in sylvan and arboreal eco-systems cannot, along with the survival of *homo sapiens sarcasticus* itself, be guaranteed.

METHODS

Research. The authors conducted a full literature search using Google Adwords. The abstracts were printed off, compressed and projected into a nearby circular file. Five abstracts were randomly selected by a research associate of one of the authors (*felix Schrodingerus*), and once these were recovered, stored in a secure location (Hazchem level 3).

A grant enabled a parallel study of the effects of multiple imibation of ethanol-derived fluids on the executive cognitive functioning of post-doctoral university employees, with the unfortunate consequence that the initial literature search had to be repeated.

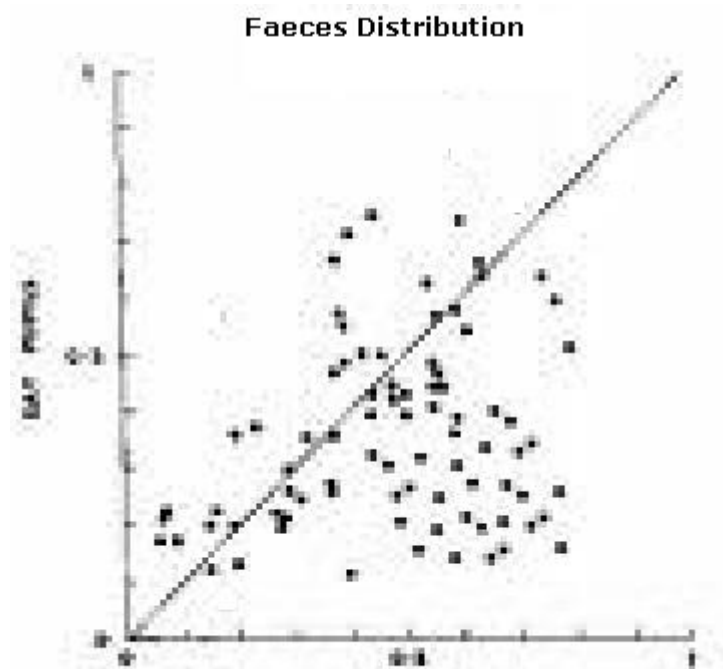


Fig 1 Scatter diagram of location of stools found, from unidentified scientific paper. Note the 'pebble-dash' distribution of the scatter diagram. This indicates that the ursine subjects may have foraged left-over Indian takeaway food left by careless campers.

This was serendipitous, as further studies were found, though none was selected for study.

Ethical approval was not sought, after the initial form- and interviewer- did not return from a contact with the subjects.

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Supplementary information is not linked to the online version of the paper at www.cattleprod.info/bears.pdf

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