*Unit 7. Natural Selection

Content Area: **Science**
Course(s): **Biology CP, Biology Honors, STEM Biology Honors**
Time Period: **April**
Length: **15 Blocks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Summary

Students *constructing explanations* and *designing solutions*, *analyzing and interpreting data*, and *engaging in argument from evidence investigate* to make sense of the relationship between the environment and natural selection. Students also develop an understanding of the factors causing natural selection of species over time. They also demonstrate and understandings of how multiple lines of evidence contribute to the strength of scientific theories of natural selection. The crosscutting concepts of *patterns* and *cause and effect* serve as a organizing concepts for the disciplinary core ideas. Students also use the science and engineering practices to demonstrate understanding of the disciplinary core ideas.

This unit is based on and HS-LS2-8, HS-LS4-3 and HS-LS4-4.

updated 6.26.17

Enduring Understandings

- Empirical evidence shows that natural selection is the only form of evolution that leads to adaptation as result of differential survival and reproductive success.
- In order for natural selection to occur, there must be variation in the expression of genetic information due to mutation and sexual reproduction that leads to variations of fitness in a population

Essential Questions

- If natural selection is present, why haven't all the "bad" genes been eliminated from the population?
- Does natural selection always lead to adaptation why or why not?
- Does living in a group (pod, herd, school, family, etc..) increase individual fitness? Why or why not?

Student Learning Objectives (PE, SEP, DCI, CCC) & Aligned Standards

Performance Expecations

Evaluate the evidence for the role of group behavior on individual and species' chances to survive and reproduce. *[Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on: (1) distinguishing between group and individual behavior, (2) identifying evidence supporting the outcomes of group behavior, and (3) developing logical and reasonable arguments based on evidence. Examples of group behaviors could include flocking, schooling, herding, and cooperative behaviors such as hunting, migrating, and swarming.]* **(HS-LS2-8)**

Apply concepts of statistics and probability to support explanations that organisms with an advantageous heritable trait tend to increase in proportion to organisms lacking this trait. *[Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on analyzing shifts in numerical distribution of traits and using these shifts as evidence to support explanations.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment is limited to basic statistical and graphical analysis. Assessment does not include allele frequency calculations.]* **(HS-LS4-3)**

Construct an explanation based on evidence for how natural selection leads to adaptation of populations. *[Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on using data to provide evidence for how specific biotic and abiotic differences in ecosystems (such as ranges of seasonal temperature, long-term climate change, acidity, light, geographic barriers, or evolution of other organisms) contribute to a change in gene frequency over time, leading to adaptation of populations.]* **(HS-LS4-4)**

Science and Engineering Practices

Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information

- Communicate scientific information (e.g., about phenomena and/or the process of development and the design and performance of a proposed process or system) in multiple formats (including orally, graphically, textually, and mathematically). (HS-LS4-1)

Analyzing and Interpreting Data

- Apply concepts of statistics and probability (including determining function fits to data, slope, intercept, and correlation coefficient for linear fits) to scientific and engineering questions and problems, using digital tools when feasible. (HS-LS4-3)

Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions

- Construct an explanation based on valid and reliable evidence obtained from a variety of sources (including students' own investigations, models, theories, simulations, peer review) and the assumption that theories and laws that describe the natural world operate today as they did in the past and will

continue to do so in the future. (HS-LS4

Engaging in Argument from Evidence

- Evaluate the evidence behind currently accepted explanations or solutions to determine the merits of arguments. (HS-LS2-8)

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS4.B: Natural Selection

- Natural selection occurs only if there is both (1) variation in the genetic information between organisms in a population and (2) variation in the expression of that genetic information—that is, trait variation—that leads to differences in performance among individuals. (HS-LS4-3)
- The traits that positively affect survival are more likely to be reproduced, and thus are more common in the population. (HSLS4-3)
- Adaptation also means that the distribution of traits in a population can change when conditions change. (HS-LS4-3)

LS4.C: Adaptation

- Natural selection leads to adaptation, that is, to a population dominated by organisms that are anatomically, behaviorally, and physiologically well suited to survive and reproduce in a specific environment. That is, the differential survival and reproduction of organisms in a population that have an advantageous heritable trait leads to an increase in the proportion of individuals in future generations that have the trait and to a decrease in the proportion of individuals that do not. (HS-LS4-4)

LS2.D: Social Interactions and Group Behavior

- Group behavior has evolved because membership can increase the chances of survival for individuals and their genetic relatives. (HSLS2-8)

Crosscutting Concepts

Cause and Effect

- Empirical evidence is required to differentiate between cause and correlation and make claims about specific causes and effects. (HS-LS4-4)

Patterns

- Different patterns may be observed at each of the scales at which a system is studied and can provide evidence for causality in explanations of phenomena. (HS-LS4-3)

Concepts & Formative Assessment

Natural Selection

Part A: *How does natural selection lead to adaptations of populations?*

Concepts

- Natural selection leads to adaptation, that is, to a population dominated by organisms that are anatomically, behaviorally, and physiologically well suited to survive and reproduce in a specific environment. That is, the differential survival and reproduction of organisms in a population that have an advantageous heritable trait leads to an increase in the proportion of individuals in future generations that have the trait and to a decrease in the proportion of individuals that do not.
- Empirical evidence is required to differentiate between cause and correlation and make claims about how natural selection leads to adaptation of populations.
- Empirical evidence is required to differentiate between cause and correlation and make claims about how specific biotic and abiotic differences in ecosystems contribute to change in gene frequency over time, leading to adaptation of populations.
- Scientific knowledge is based on the assumption that natural laws operate today as they did in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Formative Assessment

Students who understand the concepts are able to:

- Construct an explanation based on valid and reliable evidence obtained from a variety of sources (including students' own investigations, models, theories, simulations, peer review), and on the assumption that theories and laws that describe the natural world operate today as they did in the past and will continue to do so in the future, for how natural selection leads to adaptation of populations.
- Use data to differentiate between cause and correlation and to make claims about how specific biotic and abiotic differences in ecosystems contribute to change in gene frequency over time, leading to adaptation of populations.

Part B: *Why is it so important to take all of the antibiotics in a prescription if I feel better?*

Concepts

- Natural selection occurs only if there is both (1) variation in the genetic information between organisms in a population and (2) variation in the expression of that genetic information—that is, trait variation—that leads to differences in performance among individuals.
- The traits that positively affect survival are more likely to be reproduced, and thus are more common in the population.
- Natural selection leads to adaptation, that is, to a population dominated by organisms that are anatomically, behaviorally, and physiologically well suited to survive and reproduce in a specific

environment. That is, the differential survival and reproduction of organisms in a population that have an advantageous heritable trait leads to an increase in the proportion of individuals in future generations that have the trait and to a decrease in the proportion of individuals that do not.
- Adaptation also means that the distribution of traits in a population can change when conditions change.
- Different patterns may be observed at each of the scales at which a system is studied and can provide evidence for causality in explanations that organisms with an advantageous heritable trait tend to increase in proportion to organisms lacking this trait.

Formative Assessment

Students who understand the concepts are able to:

- Apply concepts of statistics and probability (including determining function fits to data, slope, intercept, and correlation coefficient for linear fits) to support explanations that organisms with an advantageous heritable trait tend to increase in proportion to organisms lacking this trait.
- Analyze shifts in numerical distribution of traits and, using these shifts as evidence, support explanations that organisms with an advantageous heritable trait tend to increase in proportion to organisms lacking this trait.
- Observe patterns at each of the scales at which a system is studied to provide evidence for causality in explanations that organisms with an advantageous heritable trait tend to increase in proportion to organisms lacking this trait.

Part C: *How are species affected by changing environmental conditions?*

Concepts

- Changes in the physical environment, whether naturally occurring or human induced, have contributed to the expansion of some species, the emergence of new distinct species as populations diverge under different conditions, and the decline, and sometimes the extinction, of some species.
- Species become extinct because they can no longer survive and reproduce in their altered environment. If members cannot adjust to change that is too fast or drastic, the opportunity for the species' evolution is lost.
- Empirical evidence is required to differentiate between cause and correlation and make claims that changes in environmental conditions may result in: (1) increases in the number of individuals of some species, (2) the emergence of new species over time, and (3) the extinction of other species.

Formative Assessment

Students who understand the concepts are able to:

- Evaluate the evidence supporting claims that changes in environmental conditions may result in: (1) increases in the number of individuals of some species, (2) the emergence of new species over time, and (3) the extinction of other species.
- Determine cause-and-effect relationships for how changes to the environment affect distribution or disappearance of traits in species.
- Use empirical evidence to differentiate between cause and correlation and to make claims that

changes in environmental conditions may result in: (1) increases in the number of individuals of some species, (2) the emergence of new species over time, and (3) the extinction of other species.

Resources

HHMI Pocket Mouse Evolution**:** This activity serves as an extension to the HHMI short film *The Making of the Fittest: Natural Selection and Adaptation* and a means of reinforcing the concepts of variation and natural selection. Students explain how variation, selection, and time fuel the process of evolution by comparing, integrating, and evaluating sources of information presented in different media or formats. They analyze and organize data, comparing and contrasting various types of data sets (both self-generated and archival).

Bunny Population Growth**:** Students will develop and use models to simulate the growth of a rabbit population in order to support explanations about the role of limiting factors and variation in maintaining or destroying the population.

Suggested Assessments

- Use a model, computer simulation, or actual data to show that natural selection is occurring in a population (peppered moth activity, HMMI pocket mouse activity, etc...)
- Explain how group behavior increases individual fitness - altruism, herding, schooling, hunting, colonies, etc....

Connecting with English Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics

English Language Arts/Literacy

- Write informative/explanatory texts describing how natural selection leads to adaptation of populations, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.
- Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research about how natural selection leads to adaptation of populations.
- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts that provide explanations that organisms with an advantageous heritable trait tend to increase in proportion to organisms lacking this trait, attending to important distinctions the author makes and to any gaps or inconsistencies in the account.
- Draw evidence from information texts to support analysis, reflection, and research about organisms with an advantageous heritable trait and their proportional increase as compared to organisms lacking this trait.
- Evaluate the hypotheses, data, analysis, and conclusions in a science or technical text supporting claims that changes in environmental conditions may result in (1) increases in the number of

individuals of some species, (2) the emergence of new species over time, and (3) the extinction of other species, verifying the data when possible and corroborating or challenging conclusions with other sources of information.
- Draw evidence from information texts making claims that changes in environmental conditions may result in: (1) increases in the number of individuals of some species, (2) the emergence of new species over time, and (3) the extinction of other species to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- Evaluate the hypotheses, data, analysis, and conclusions in a science or technical text about the role of group behavior on individual and species' chances to survive and reproduce, verifying the data when possible and corroborating or challenging conclusions with other sources of information.

Mathematics

- Represent how natural selection leads to adaptation of populations symbolically, and manipulate the representing symbols. Make sense of quantities and relationships between specific biotic and abiotic differences in ecosystems and their contributions to a change in gene frequency over time that leads to adaptation of populations.
- Represent symbolically the proportional increase in organisms with an advantageous heritable trait as compared with organisms lacking this trait, and manipulate the representing symbols. Make sense of quantities and relationships between the proportional increase in organisms with an advantageous heritable trait as compared with the numbers of organisms lacking this trait.

Modifications

Teacher Note: Teachers identify the modifications that they will use in the unit. The unneeded modifications can then be deleted from the list.

- Restructure lesson using UDL principals (http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#.VXmoXcfD_UA)
- Structure lessons around questions that are authentic, relate to students' interests, social/family background and knowledge of their community.
- Provide students with multiple choices for how they can represent their understandings (e.g. multisensory techniques-auditory/visual aids; pictures, illustrations, graphs, charts, data tables, multimedia, modeling).
- Provide opportunities for students to connect with people of similar backgrounds (e.g. conversations via digital tool such as SKYPE, experts from the community helping with a project, journal articles, and biographies).
- Provide multiple grouping opportunities for students to share their ideas and to encourage work among various backgrounds and cultures (e.g. multiple representation and multimodal experiences).
- Engage students with a variety of Science and Engineering practices to provide students with multiple entry points and multiple ways to demonstrate their understandings.
- Use project-based science learning to connect science with observable phenomena.
- Structure the learning around explaining or solving a social or community-based issue.
- Provide ELL students with multiple literacy strategies.
- Collaborate with after-school programs or clubs to extend learning opportunities.

Research on Student Learning

High-school students, even after some years of biology instruction, have difficulties understanding the notion of natural selection. A major hindrance to understanding natural selection appears to be students' inability to integrate two distinct processes in evolution, the occurrence of new traits in a population and their effect on long-term survival. Many students believe that environmental conditions are responsible for changes in traits, or that organisms develop new traits because they need them to survive, or that they over-use or under-use certain bodily organs or abilities. By contrast, students have little understanding that chance alone produces new heritable characteristics by forming new combinations of existing genes or by mutations of genes. Some students believe that a mutation modifies an individual's own form during its life rather than only its germ cells and offspring (see almost any science fiction movie). Students also have difficulties understanding that changing a population results from the survival of a few individuals that preferentially reproduce, not from the gradual change of all individuals in the population. Explanations about "insects or germs becoming more resistant" rather than "more insects or germs becoming resistant" may reinforce these misunderstandings. Specially designed instruction can improve students' understanding of natural selection.

High-school students may have difficulties with the various uses of the word "adaptation". In everyday usage, individuals adapt deliberately. But in the theory of natural selection, populations change or "adapt" over generations, inadvertently students of all ages often believe that adaptations result from some overall purpose or design, or they describe adaptation as a conscious process to fulfill some need or want. Elementary- and middle-school students also tend to confuse non-inherited adaptations acquired during an individual's lifetime with adaptive features that are inherited in a population(NSDL, 2015).

References

Adapted from the New Jesery NGSS Science Model Curriclum

Connections to NJSLS

English Language Arts

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. **WHST.9-12.7** (HS-LS4-5)

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest. **SL.11-12.5** (HS-LS1-2)

Evaluate the hypotheses, data, analysis, and conclusions in a science or technical text, verifying the data when possible and corroborating or challenging conclusions with other sources of information. **RST.11-12.8** (HS-LS4-5)

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. **WHST.9-12.9** (HS-LS4-5)

Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claim or a recommendation for solving a scientific or technical problem **RST.9-10.8**. (HS-LS2-8)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to important distinctions the author makes and to any gaps or inconsistencies in the account. **RST.11-12.1** (HS-LS2-8)

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem. **RST.11-12.7** (HS-LS2-8)

Evaluate the hypotheses, data, analysis, and conclusions in a science or technical text, verifying the data when possible and corroborating or challenging conclusions with other sources of information. **RST.11-12.8** (HS-LS2-8)

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes. WHST.9-12.2 (HS-LS4-1),(HS-LS4-2)

Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. SL.11-12.4 (HS-LS4-1),(HS-LS4-2)

Mathematics

Reason abstractly and quantitatively. **MP.2** (HS-LS4-5)

Model with mathematics. MP.4 (HS-LS4-2)