
Modern Humans - Nature'S Ultimate Predators

Sci-fi movies like Arnold Schwarzenegger's Predator the first had us confused about another supreme species being the ultimate predators, Shane Black's fantasy alien warriors might exist in another Galaxy but not here, however the movie depicts what and how the apex predators looks like and acts like. Therefore when you think of the Ultimate predators, consider yourself and myself in this twenty-first century as one as I will be elaborating on what makes humans ultimate and not some fictional characters. Scientifically and biologically speaking, apex predators are the ultimate killers that must occupy top spot on the food chain, without them the cycle of life will be unbalance and fallout in nature would be imminent. Same thing could be said for organisms lower on the food chain, without lower animals (preys), imbalance in nature are inevitable. That being said, there are predators and there are also ultimate predators, at the top of the list of nature's most ferocious animals is human being. Before I explained how we got here due to our fierce survival instinct which placed us near the top on the food chain, I will like to go tangential briefly into evolution of the modern man.

EVOLUTIONARY KILLERS- HOMO SAPIENS TO PRESENT DAY MAN

Natural selection as stipulated in the theory of evolution explains that there is a change in behaviour (evolving hunting skills) and heritable physical features (our ability and inability to adapt to changes and make immediate environment habitable by developing it). This also includes learning, which has made advancement in technology possible; hence man has been able to harness education to create many vices and crafts to stay near the top of the food chain and survive, something 20,000BC man could not accomplish. The modern man is a Homo sapiens, but a much more sophisticated one which has created several tools to survive; with these tools the modern man is out-competing other predators in existence. In the wild, the deep ocean and in the air, other top predators are under threat to mankind irrespective of how ferocious they are. Although evolution by natural selection often define as survival of the fittest, this could be misleading claimed scientist based on the fact that there are several other animals stronger and more fit than human, so if humans are inferior and weaker than some of these animals, then what placed us as the ultimate predators and near the top of the food chain? Briana Pobiner, an anthropologist and educator at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of National History Washington DC highlighted that, "fitness" does not mean a particular organism's agility or athletic abilities nor strength, but the ability to survive by making use of the available resources around and the ability to reproduce is the true definition of "survival of the fittest". Looking at Pobiner's thesis, no other organisms has been able to successfully achieve this except humans, and this has also been substantiated by several theories in science with supporting evidence gathered across a wide spectrum of scientific disciplines like Developmental Biology, Genetics, Geology and Palaeontology.

WHAT REALLY MAKES MAN THE ULTIMATE PREDATOR

Lions, Orcas, Sharks, Polar bears, Tigers, Crocs and so on are all top predators in their habitats because they top food chain in their respective habitat. Naturally, top predators do not have "natural predators", that is, they are the dominant killer in their vicinity and nothing else could kill them as prey, these apex predator principles have been in existence since the evolution of

humans i. e. before the extinction of Dinosaurs and T-Rex, one of the apex predator back then. However, man became the ultimate and apex predator with advancement from early technology to modern ones, for example, taking a man or woman from 10,000BC or 20,000BC whose natural habitat is the wild, the chances of survival without sophisticated tool (weapons) is zero and such a man or woman could become an easy prey are by-products of human's evolution from early man to modern man, this increased the level of lethality of man above all other ape predators, and hence humans continue to climb higher to the top of the food chain. Without much natural predators (except sickness, war, Natural disaster, famine, drought), this placed human in pole position due to his technical survival instincts. State-of-the-art weapons (tools) have been created to kill the biggest and the fiercest predators on land, in the deep and in the air.

From Biological standpoint, any organism displaced out of its natural habitat will become vulnerable and not do well to survive (prey and predators inclusive), each easily falls prey to other top predators in the new environment. A typical example I want to use to illustrate is a lion, a brown bear or maybe leopard placed in the ocean could easily be killed by an average size tiger shark, so also if the largest killer whale or the largest Crocs (Nile Crocs) is placed on land, it will end up on the menu list of land predators. But man has successfully gone out of his habitat and yet survived; take note of the word man which is referring to the modern twenty-first century man. There is a great different between a 10,000BC man and a 21st century man who has mastered the art of marksmanship and could use any calibre of Gun or Crossbows to take down any animal close or hundreds of yards away. As super predators, our species' takes on full adults of other predators once we take interest in them, no matter how big and dangerous. Unlike other predators that often targets the weak or juveniles, the modern man is different when it comes to our choice of prey. Another factor to consider is this, humans are the most widely distributed species on earth hence there is hardly no ecosystem that had been affected by our predatory acts. But thanks to our complex brain and structures, we have not being having detrimental impact on wildlife and ecosystem because we kill in a different way from other top killers. Not much can be said for poachers who kill for tusks and trophy hunters. Despite the fact that we are somehow weak without tools (weapons, traps), that does not debunk the fact that our ability to think and create these devices is a function of our evolutionary advancement that has put us on the forefront. Just imagine if lions, tigers, gorillas and so on with their massive body and strengths with great athletic skills should become as advance in thinking and development like the modern day man, is that not dooms day looming like the Planet of Apes movies?

IN CONCLUSION

Irrespective of our abilities and skills as the modern and higher animals to kill and eat any animal (apex predators inclusive) as meals, we are still not at the top of the food chain. Analysts have researched that humans are still somewhere above the middle based on how Human Trophic Level- HTL, this is the measurement of a species position in the food web and although we are apex predators as I have highlighted, as t 2009, human's HTL was 2. 21 which is the same value as compared to pigs. Apex predators normally should go as high as 5. 5, maybe when humans starts to consider Orcas, Sharks, Lions, Seals, Dolphins, Bald Eagles, Hyenas and several other top predators as meats aside from ruminants (beef, mutton and goat meat) and poultry birds, maybe and just maybe out HTL might increase and we find ourselves scientifically stable on the food web, on top of the food chain.

eduzaurus.com