

# Hybrid butterfly created by scientists

**Scottish scientists say a South American butterfly species was created from two different butterflies in an evolutionary process thought impossible.**

Study co-author Chris Jiggins of Scotland's University of Edinburgh told National Geographic News the phenomenon was discovered by successfully creating the butterfly in the lab, using "second-hand parts" from two related species.

The researchers say animals are thought usually to evolve in the opposite manner -- when a single species gradually splits into two over many generations.

They told National Geographic News their creation reveals a process called hybrid speciation, in which the genes of two existing species combine to produce a third. The study suggests hybridization may be more important to the evolution of new animals than previously thought.

Hybrids such as the mule -- a cross between a donkey and a horse -- are sterile. But National Geographic News says the butterfly hybrid brought together a combination of genes that allowed it to breed and, therefore, considered a new species.

The team behind the discovery describes how it re-created the black, red, and yellow *Heliconius heurippa* butterfly in the journal *Nature*.

*Copyright 2006 by United Press International*

*This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.*